Weaverville United Methodist Church

Weaverville, N.C.

A History

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Dedication

In this publication a great effort has been made to preserve some of the history of those early Methodists who began the United Methodist Church of Weaverville -those staunch, God-fearing people who worked so untiringly to leave for us a heritage of love, of knowledge, and Christian leadership. May their memory be forever cherished and preserved.

Our Church is greatly indebted to Mrs. John C. Wright, William C. Reeves and Stanley L. West for their many months of unselfish service in compiling this information, and to David Neal Horn, who did the art work on the cover.

Thus for the Glory of God and man this book is lovingly dedicated to the memory of all those great Methodists who left us such a wonderful Church heritage, and to those who will keep alive that heritage in years to come.

-Ora B. Burgin

Prologue

In writing a history of our church some 170 years after its founding is no small undertaking. It is our desire to leave with you as accurate and complete a record as possible.

We cannot claim "inspiration" as the ones of old, who compiled the Holy Writ 400 years later, but we do claim the blessing as promised, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

We feel that we have been blessed by having been members of the Weaverville Methodist Church for so long a time, and that the church has been blessed by its close association with those of the highest authority in the early days of Methodism in America.

For the first fifty years of our primary source of information has come from the records of the Holston Conference. What more reliable source could be found? The writer, Dr. Richard N. Price was one of us, having married Ann Vance, the sister of Governor Zebulon Vance. Dr. Price visited in the home of Prof. M. A. Yost and is remembered by his son, Marion Yost.

-Stanley L. West

1800 - 1850

Stanley L. West

The Holston Conference

It is our belief that very few of our present day members know much about the "old circuit riding preachers that served scattered populations in our area."

Soon after the Revolution there was established on the Holston River near the present town of Elizabethton, Tennessee, what was called the Western District of the Methodist Church in America. From it one of the first circuits was the French Broad Circuit. The preachers travelled on horseback over the first road built connecting Tennessee, North Carolina and South Carolina. This was the old Warm Springs Road. Later the name was changed to Hot Springs, where springs of a higher temperature were found. This road came through what is now Lake Louise and was within 3 or 4 minutes ride of our Camp Ground.

Since the preachers of that early date had no established places to preach, they spoke wherever folks were gathered. It is reasonable to believe that after the Camp Ground was formed about 1810, that most of those assigned to the French Broad Circuit preached there. After the meeting house was built in 1835, it was a regular stopping place.

Bishop Francis Asbury, the first bishop of the Methodist Church in America, tells in his Journal of travelling the Warm Springs Road and resting overnight at the home of pioneer John Weaver. From this close association, no doubt, the family changed from the faith of a Presbyterian to that of a Methodist. John's sons, Jacob and Montraville, later became local preachers in the Methodist Church. The Bishop made several trips over the period from 1800 to 1814. His preaching established Methodism in Buncombe County.

A list of the ones assigned to the French Broad Circuit and other divisions of the circuit will be given later. There were many local preachers and we will include some of them.

The First Methodist Church

The majority of those who first came over the mountains through the Swannanoa Gap were Scotch-Irish and Presbyterian from Mecklenburg County. Their ancestors had founded the "Old Centre Church," an historical landmark. Some of them crossed through Bull Gap and settled on Upper Reems Creek. They built a Presbyterian Church at Vanceville, now Hemphill. The minutes of this church list pioneer John Weaver as a member.

In 1805 he and his neighbors built a small log Methodist Church on the north side, adjoining the cemetery on South Main Street. The place was probably where he, his wife and young son Jacob got their first view of the Reems Creek Valley. They had come from the north along an old Indian trail, now the Main Street of Weaverville.

The Camp Ground

In order to understand how important the Camp Ground was to the establishment of Methodism in our area, it is necessary to explore the need for such. And to do that a brief look at the early settlement of this area will not be amiss.

The history of North Carolina is peculiar in the fact that, although Sir Walter Raleigh's ships landed at Roanoke Island, 35 years before the Pilgrims had left Plymouth, England, it was one hundred years before the first colony was settled at Bath, and still another one hundred years before the Blue Ridge Mountains were crossed.

There were so many reasons for this long delay, that a reading of North Carolina history would be of interest.

After the settling of Mecklenburg County in 1762, King George III of England issued a proclamation in 1763, forbidding his provincial Governors from granting any land for settlement West of the Appalachians, in our case, the Blue Ridge.

Many had come to the eastern slopes of the Blue Ridge, and were waiting to cross and "see what was on the other side of the mountains." They had established "Davidson's Fort" (Old Fort) for their protection from the hostile Cherokees. There they waited for a period of about twenty years, until 1784.

When it was safe to cross, they spread out and settled where water could be found, in creeks, branches and springs.

Land was granted in tracts of 640 acres (a square mile). Since there were no roads, only Indian and buffalo trails, this separated relatives and friends for great distances, and visiting was rare. This created a need for a common meeting place and the Camp Ground idea was born. At first it was not a gathering for religious purpose, but only for families and friends to camp for fellowship, games, etc. They would bring provisions for several days. As time passed, it proved so good an opportunity for the Circuit Riders to preach to large congregations that the gatherings were organized into religious groups. This form, as explained by the Rev. Price, historian of the Holston Conference, was as follows:

> "At a time of the great religious interest in the West families often came a considerable distance to attend sacramental, quarterly or other popular meetings. A wagon was taken to convey the family and provisions to enable them to remain several days on the ground. A little experience with bad weather, soon suggested a tent. Hundreds and thousands remained for several days, preaching, singing, praying and laboring for the salvation of souls. Some used cloth tents, some brush arbors, others erected temporary shelters of poles and boards. Finally the regular Camp Ground came in vogue. Log houses and framed and weatherboarded cottages were built.
>
> "Camp Grounds were generally selected near some spring affording an abundance of water for man and beast.
>
> "A shed was erected large enough to accomodate thousands of people and was seated with plain slab seats. A pulpit was erected at one end, the rostrum was quite large, with a seat sufficiently long enough to seat several ministers.

"The order of exercises was usually as follows: A trumpet was sounded about daylight for the people to arise and prepare for worship. The second trumpet announced family prayers in each tent. The third trumpet announced public prayer under the shed. Breakfast followed. There was preaching at 8 and 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. and at early candlelighting.

"The preaching was usually direct and pointed and was followed by stirring exhortations."

In the Rev. Price's quote he mentions that the Camp Ground was usually built near a spring. In the case of our Camp Ground, there were five springs in a reasonable distance, the closest being the one on Merrimon Avenue, near the intersection of Grove Street. This spring was on the road from Reems Creek to the Camp Ground, and later to Weaver College. It also served those who rode the trolley car to Asheville. The terminal for the car was at one time near the intersection of Grove Street with Merrimon Avenue. When the end of the line was extended, the terminal was moved up to the front of where the present post office is located. This spring can still be seen, with a concrete covering over it.

If in the future historical monuments should be erected by the town, this spring should be the first to be honored, for it dates back as far as 1810.

Dr. Price also mentions that log and framed cottages were built and, no doubt, our Camp Ground had many of them, for they would have been needed to house those who attended the Holston Conferences of 1835 and 1844. There would also have been a need to house soldiers of the Confederate Army during an epidemic of pneumonia when they were transferred from an encampment at the present Beaver Lake to higher ground.

These cottages and springs were also influential in the selection of the site for Weaver College.

The Reems Creek Camp Ground

The Reems Creek Camp Ground was established about 1810 on the ridge just west of where the first church was built. For more than 50 years this was a meeting place for families to gather for fellowship, preaching, games, etc. Its popularity was such that outlying neighborhoods would gather and, quoting from Dr. Price, "It was a very popular Camp Ground. Great meetings were held there. Thousands of souls were converted to God at that sacred place. Some of the greatest preachers of the church preached there."

Attesting to its popularity is the fact that the 13th session of the Holston Conference and the first session of the Conference in North Carolina was held on its grounds in 1836. Considering the fact that the Holston Conference territory covered parts of Virginia, Tennessee, South Carolina and North Carolina, this was quite an honor.

Eight years later in 1844 another Annual Conference was held there. This was the last Conference before the separation of the Methodist Episcopal Church into the M. E. North and the M. E. South. At this session 46 preachers from four states attended, along with many lay leaders. When, in our memory, have so many prominent people assembled in our midst? We should indeed be proud of our heritage.

The Camp Ground extended from about 100 feet south of the present Masonic Lodge building to the residence of Marion Yost. On its northern boundary was built the Conference House in 1835, to house the Holston Annual Conference.

A deed of 1844 from Andrew Pickens and Montraville Weaver to the Trustees of the M. E. Church Salem Gamp Ground states, in its description, "as being about five acres, being in the state of North Carolina, County of Buncombe and lying on the waters of Reems Creek, and including the new Meeting House now built on the property." From this it can be assumed that a new Meeting House was built about 1843 and the name of the Camp Ground and Meeting House was changed to Salem Camp Ground and Church.

Holston Conference Preachers 1810 - 1835

The following is a list of Holston Conference preachers, who, from 1810 to 1835, when the Conference House was built, were assigned to the French Broad District, where they probably preached at our Camp Ground.

1810 - William Patterson - Thomas Trower. This year Bishop Francis Asbury and Henry Boehm preached at Buncombe Court House and it is said that everyone who possibly could attended.

1811 - George Elkins - Josiah Crawford - Jessie Richardson. Bishop Francis Asbury and Bishop William McKendree preached in Asheville.

1813 - John Hartin. This year Bishop Asbury preached at the Killians on Beaver Dam.

1814 - Jonathan Jackson - Nicholas Talley. This year Bishop Asbury preached at Asheville. His travelling companion and preacher was Rev. John W. Bond.

1815 - John Bowman

1818 - Allen Turner

1819 - John S. Ford

1820 - Thomas L. Winn

1824 - David Flemming. David S. Cummins organized the first Methodist Church in Asheville.

1825 - Thomas Stringfield - Josiah Daughtry - David Flemming. An interesting story concerning Thomas Stringfield is given in the Holston Conference records and is being mentioned here, for the reason that several of the ones mentioned are from the "waters of Reems Creek." It also shows that many of the prominent men of Buncombe County lived in our area. The story is as follows: In a controversy over the way of the selection of preachers for the stations, Mr. Stringfield mentioned that the Presbyterians allowed each church to select its own preacher. At one time in Buncombe County five Presbyterian preachers tried to serve the same church in one year, creating a situation of personal abuse of each other. This was denied by Dr. Baxter, a Presbyterian. Then Mr. Stringfield secured certificates of the truth of his statement from the following: (The first ten being from our area) Allan Fox, William Fox, William Brittain, Joseph F. Brittain, David Vance, James Hughey, Robert Brittain, John Weaver, Sr., Andrew Pickens, Jacob Weaver, George W. Jones, John Chambers, David Killian, Lydia Killian, James M. Alexander, Rachel Alexander, Michael Francis -some of these were Presbyterian.

1826 - William F. Brownlow. He was also the publisher of a newspaper and a Whig, whose writings were mainly responsible for East Tennessee supporting the Union Army. It is said that the first Congressional District of East Tennessee sent more men to the Federal Army than any other district in the Union Army -by a margin of 251 men. This is the year that the Asheville District was formed. Also in 1826 William S. Manson arrived in our district.

1827 - George Atkins. He was also editor of the Asheville News.

1829 - This is the year that Montraville Weaver, youngest son of pioneer John Weaver, was licensed to preach.

1830 - Rev. H. Merrimon, who settled in Asheville. This was the year of the organization of the Methodist Protestant Church.

1831 - William Patton - Elbert S. Sevier. Patton lived on property of James Alexander near Monticello Road.

1833 - David B. Carter.

1835 - John Siler Weaver. He was admitted to the Conference and travelled eight years. He was the son of Jacob Weaver.

1836 - The Holston Conference was held at the Camp Ground and was the first ever held in North Carolina. Bishop James O. Andrew was present, but was ill and William Patton presided.

1838 - Rev. Andrew Pickens. This is a sketch of Rev. Pickens recorded by Dr. Price: "Rev. Pickens joined the South Carolina Conference in 1810 and travelled in North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. Pickens located on Reems Creek and, as a farmer, he reared and educated a respectful family. His wife was a sister of Jacob and Montraville Weaver, who were well known local preachers. In 1838 he became a member of the Holston Conference and travelled for three years. In 1850 a division of the Sons of Temperance was organized in Salem Church, the church with which he and his family were connected."

Rev. Pickens, like many men of his day, was violently opposed to secret societies and especially to permitting the societies to meet in a Christian church.

He gave one son to the ministry, Robert Wesley Pickens, who served many years with the Holston Conference. He, Andrew Pickens, was tried and excluded from the M. E. Church. With about 100 fellowers he joined the Methodist Protestant Church.

1840 - Rev. D. R. McAnally. He became associate editor of the Asheville Highlander Messenger newspaper. The Conference disapproved of his connection with the paper.

1843 - Rev. William Rush

1844 - The Holston Conference was held at Salem Camp Ground. This was the last before the separation of the M. E. Church into the M. E. North and the M. E. South. This was brought about because of the different views on slavery. General Conference charged that Bishop James O. Andrew was a slave holder and the bishop was requested to resign. The fact was that his wife owned the slaves, having received them by inheritance from her previous husband.

1845 - Gabriel F. Page - Alexander Nelson Harris, Reems Creek Circuit. His father was Rev. Dr. John C. Harris and his mother was Sarah Reagan Harris.

1848 - Ulrich Keener

1849 - William H. Rogers - Andrew C. Hunter

1850 - James N. Price - James Americus Reagan. 1850 is the year that is most important to the town of Weaverville for two reasons. It is the year that Montraville Weaver moved up from the valley to the ridge and built his home on the lot adjoining the north side of the post office. Later along the ridge he build homes for his children, as they were married.

The other reason is the coming of Dr. James Americus Reagan, as a young Holston Conference Circuit Rider. He married Mary Ann Weaver, a daughter of Montraville Weaver. He built a home and served the community for over 50 years.

Dr. Reagan was the most important person to have ever lived in our village. Facts are written in his diary. A sketch of him is recorded by Dr. Price in the History of the Holston Conference. Records of the Masonic Lodge and other sources leave with us the profile of this remarkable man. Some of the information as recorded by Dr. Price, has been included in Miss Nell Pickens' book, Dry Ridge, but is worth recording here:

"At the Conference held in Abingdon, Virginia, in 1850 James A. Reagan and myself were appointed to the Asheville Circuit, in company with George W. Alexander and David Sullins. We made the trip to Buncombe on horseback. In the bounds of the Holston Conference there was not a mile of railroad at that time. Our first night in Buncombe was spent at the hospitable home of Dr. James Wood at Warm Springs (now Hot Springs). The next day (Saturday) we dined with Mr. Samuel Smith at the Mouth of Ivy. Mr. Smith was a hospitable and well-to-do Baptist, but his wife, who was the daughter of Bedent Baird, and her family were Methodist. The night was spent with Col. James Alexander at the place which now bears his name. The four rode together to Salem Church on Reems Creek, to find a large and curious congregation awaiting the new preachers. Reagan preached and made a fine impression. The Spirit was evidently present.

"On one of the rear seats sat two girls who were cousins, Mary Weaver and Ann Vance. As the two circuit preachers, who were bachelors, walked in with their saddle bags over their left arms, Ann whispered to Mary, 'Which will you take?' Ann was compelled to take Hobson's choice, and she replied, 'The long one; he looks so much like Father Haskew.' All of this was just pleasantry, but the humorous words of these girls were prophetic. Before the Conference year was out James and Mary were husband and wife, but the long-legged man was more difficult to capture and it was nearly five years before Richard and Ann became one. No two men were ever more fortunate in being captured and incarcerated."

Dr. Reagan's house, as recorded in his diary, was the sixth to be built in what is now the incorporated town limits of Weaverville. After serving for seven years, he became too ill to risk the hardships of a circuit rider and he studied for the medical profession. He served as the community doctor until his death in 1910.

He was the principal person in the founding of Weaverville College, and served as its first president. He was president of the first school, the Sons of Temperance High School. He was the first master of Blackmer Masonic Lodge, and first mayor of the town of Weaverville. He was on the Medical Examining Board of the State of North Carolina for six years and served as president of the Medical Society of Buncombe County. He held many other important positions, too numerous to mention.

His children, Prof. James Jerome Reagan and Dr. Latta Reagan and their families have been stalwart members of the Methodist Church through all the years, down to the present day.

Some of those mentioned by Dr. Price: Bedent Baird was the great grandfather of Henry Baird and lived on the Warm Springs Road just behind the present home of Henry Baird.

James M. Alexander was a Presbyterian, but changed to the Methodist faith. After leaving Alexander, he built a home near Alexander Chapel on Aiken Road. He is buried in the cemetery of this church. The home, named "Montraville" became well known and is featured prominently in the history of the Battle of Asheville during the Civil War.

Ann Vance was the sister of Governor Zebulon Vance.

Mary Weaver was the daughter of Montraville Weaver.

Father Haskew mentioned by Ann Weaver, was probably Rev. Haskew, a local preacher from the Flat Creek area, who stayed at the home of Zebulon Vance.

1850 - 1909

William C. Reeves

Although the minutes of an Asheville District Conference held on May 22, 1868 at Salem Church refer to the death of the Rev. Jacob Weaver and state that he professed religion in the fall of 1812, united with the Methodist Church, and within a year was licensed as a local preacher, there are no records available referring to a Methodist organization in this area until 1841. On April 26th of that year a quarterly meeting was held at Sulphur Springs. These minutes note that John S. Weaver, great, great, great grandfather of Matthew Weaver, was appointed recording steward. R. B. Vance was listed as class leader and it is recorded that the Salem Church gave $5.

The first entry in the minute book refers to a quarterly conference at Sardis on May 13, 1825. Sandy Mush and Turkey Creek are the only charges whose names and locations are now familiar.

The minutes of August 11, 1849 list as a member present, Jesse Palmer, great, great, great grandfather of William C. Reeves. Jacob Weaver was present as a deacon, and John S. Weaver was listed as a licensed elder and steward. Salem is credited with a gift of $4.60. In the report for February 9, 1850, Salem had given $4. On June 30, 1850 it was noted that John S. Weaver was accompanied by his uncle, M. Montraville Weaver, at the meeting.

September 20, 1850 found the Conference meeting at the Reems Creek Camp Ground. In addition to the $7.50 credited to Salem Church, it is stated that a public collection amounted to $50. Jacob Weaver and his son, John Siler Weaver, were mentioned as having their "Character examined and passed."

The minutes of the Asheville Circuit meeting of November 18, 1850 record for the first time the name of J. A. Reagan as P. C. (Preacher in Charge). For fifty-nine years this name loomed large in the affairs of the church and community. He was the first president of Weaverville College, mayor of the Town of Weaverville, and Master of Blackmer Masonic Lodge, A. F. & A. M. for eight terms. He was a doctor and surgeon and, above all, a great leader in the Church. The name of James Americus Reagan is noted year after year in the minutes of the quarterly conferences, until the last entry of July 23-24, 1908, when his final report states, "Due to afflictions, I have not been able to preach but twice during the present year, but now feel able to do more."

Dr. Reagan received for his first quarterage $9.50, plus $4.30 travel expenses. The minutes of March 29, 1851 note that his quarterage was $17.90. This conference was at Beaverdam and, along with Dr. Reagan, Jacob, John S. and M. M. Weaver were in attendance. At the August 30, 1852 meeting at Turkey Creek Camp Ground Dr. Reagan received $53.40 quarterage and 77 cents travel expense. Salem Church was represented by Jacob and John S. Weaver, along with Jacob's younger son, Jesse R. Weaver, the great grandfather of Blanche Robertson. In March, 1852, Jacob, John S., Jesse R. and M. M. Weaver were listed as present, along with William R. Chambers.

Big Sandy Mush was the site of the February 27, 1853 meeting, with Dr. Reagan in attendance, reporting $5 from Salem Church. May 7, 1853 found the meeting at Salem Meeting House, with the Rev. W. F. Parker reporting as pastor. The Rev. Parker reported that there were eight Sabbath Schools in the circuit with 140 scholars. He received $12.44 as quarterage and $1.08 as travel expense. The Rev. Parker, who married Margaret Weaver, daughter of Montraville Weaver, is buried in the old Weaverville cemetery. He was the grandfather of Mrs. W. Arthur Robinson.

The 4th quarter conference at Asbury Camp Ground on September 10, 1853, again noted W. F. Parker as P. C., with Dr. J. A. Reagan and John S. Weaver listed as present. Mr. Parker's travel expense was $1 and his quarterage had risen to $48.41.

The January 7, 1854 meeting was at Plemons S. H., with Dr. J. A. Reagan as secretary and J. M. Baldwin listed as P. C. It was recorded that Salem had given $5 for the support of the minister. March 18, 1854 found the meeting at Big Ivy, with Dr. J. A. Reagan as secretary and only $3 reported from Salem. On May 20, 1854 the meeting convened at Jewel Hill (Walnut). Salem was credited with $3.50. Turkey Creek Camp Ground was host to the September 16, 1854 meeting, with Dr. J. A. Reagan again as secretary. John S. and M. M. Weaver, together with Jacob Weaver had their "Character examined and were found to be approved as licensed elders." Salem's contribution for support of the gospel was noted as $12.60.

> "Dearly Beloved -
> Remember the Friday immediately preceding each Quarterly Meeting as a day of fasting and prayers for the prosperity of Zion, and the success of your ministers.
>
> September 10, 1851 William Hicks, P. C.
> J. A. Reagan, T. E.
> R. N. Price, T. P."

The above is entered on the first page of a book entitled Class Book for Salem Class 1851.

One hundred twenty-three names are listed on this first roll. Many are quite familiar to those of us who were brought up in this community. Others are less familiar, but are still represented in the area. The remaining are names no longer found in the families of this region.

There are numerous terse quotations opposite names that have been marked through, entries such as "left the Country," "joined the Protestants," and one, "joined the Baptists," are found. One brother was "Expelled for inveighing against the Discipline & usages; and for violating a contract entered into for the peace of the church." Twelve bear the notation, "Withdrew because of the order of the Sons of Temperance."

It appears that in 1850 an organization of the Sons of Temperance was formed in the Salem Church and held its meetings within the church. The Rev. R. N. Price, in his History of Holston Methodism, reports that the Rev. Andrew Pickens, who had come to this section in 1910 and had married Catherine Weaver, daughter of John and Elizabeth Weaver in 1815, belonged to the Salem Church. He, as well as many other men of the day, was violently opposed to secret societies. He was especially opposed to permitting such societies to meet in the church.

The Rev. Price says, "This opposition led to controversy and the controversy degenerated into bitterness and alienation among the members." He further states, "About one hundred members withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal Church." This is more fully reported in Dry Ridge, the history of this community written by Miss Nell Pickens.

This book quotes the Rev. Price's report of the assignment of James A. Reagan and Price to the Asheville Circuit and the events that led up to the marriage of Mary Weaver to Dr. Reagan and Ann Vance to the Rev. Price.

This first Salem Class Roll bears the names of Jacob Weaver and his wife, Elizabeth, and four of their five sons, together with their wives. It lists Montraville Weaver and wife, Jane, and their five daughters. Their sons were not of age to be members at this date. William Baird and wife, Christina, daughter of Jacob, were grandparents of Henry Baird and were on this first list. William C. and Malinda Garrison, grandparents of the late Jeff H. and Annie Laurie Garrison, who were members of this church, were on the list.

The roll for 1853-54 has the admonition for fasting and prayer signed by William Hicks, P. E. and G. W. Renfro, T. E. and the notation of preachers for the year, R. W. Patty, P. E., John D. Baldwin, P. C., M. P. Swaim, L. P., and John T. Stansbury.

The customary admonition dated July 29, 1854 is signed by the above four ministers and 104 names are on the roll. Dr. J. A. Reagan, L. E. was enrolled, along with his wife Mary, daughter of M. M. Weaver. The next roll bears no date, but R. W. Patty was still P. E. and J. M. Varnell, T. E. signed the admonition. This roll carried only 90 names. Robert W. Pickens and wife, Caroline E., were added to the roll. They are the great, great, great grandparents of Susie Cole. They are buried in the old Weaverville Cemetery.

The admonition for the September 14, 1857 minutes is signed by R. W. Patty, P. E. and W. K. Foster, T. P. This roll bears the further caution, "Remember Lot's wife." Ninty-one names were listed. W. B. Cheek and wife were added to the roll. The Cheeks were ancestors of Lester Cheek, prominent layman of the Clark's Chapel Church and of the three sons of Richard Hunt.

William Hicks, P. E., L. C. Delasmith, P. C. and J. F. Woodfin, A. P. signed the admonition dated September 27, 1858. The roll had diminished to 62 names. The entry, "died in great peace, Tuesday, the 8th of November, 1859" is by the name of Caroline Pickens, great grandmother of Chaplain Ernest M. Reagan, Jr. The unusual story of the events leading up to her death are related in Dry Ridge.

The March 15, 1861 entry is signed by F. M. Fanning, P. E. and H. P. Waugh, P. C. This roll had grown to 84 names. The notation, "Departed this life October 27, 1861" appears by the name of Christina Baird, Grandmother of Henry Baird. The book states that three members were "Expelled for immoral conduct, on April 16, 1863." Eliza Weaver (Reagan), grandmother of the late Frank W. Reagan, and Susan Weaver (Roberts), grandmother of Blanche R. Robertson, were admitted on probation March 14, 1862. Judson Haren (Herron), whose descendants are members of the Pleasant Grove Church, was added to the roll. Leonidas Weaver, soon to wear the grey of the Confederate Army, was freed of his probationary period on June 30, 1863, as was Frances C. Pickens (Garrison), great grandmother of Susie Cole.

The roll of 91 names dated April 19, 1863, notes that Mary C. Weaver, wife of John S. Weaver and great, great grandmother of Matthews Weaver, "departed this life July 23, 1865 on the Holy Sabbath in holy triumph of the Christian religion." The statement "killed in the war" appears by the name of James T. Weaver, grandfather of the late Lynn Weaver, who was the husband of Ethel B. Weaver. Col. Weaver was killed in action, December 7, 1864. A number of members were listed as having withdrawn to the Methodist Protestant and M. E. Churches. Robert H. Weaver, father of Miss Minnie Weaver, was admitted from the probationary period, as was Pitser Weaver, grandfather of L. A. Weaver.

G. Taylor, P. E. and Jacob R. Payne, P. C. signed the roll of May 12, 1866,

with 56 members listed. Elizabeth Cheek, grandmother of Clara W. Reeves, was added to the roll. Soon thereafter Elizabeth was married to J. Leonidas Weaver.

Only 50 names were listed on the roll dated September 17, 1866, with G. Taylor, still P. E. and J. R. Payne, P. C. Tennessee Reagan, mother of Mrs. Anne Pyne, Mrs. Margaret Willingham and Mrs. Inez Ward, along with her brother, William Latta Reagan, father of the late Bonnie Reagan, were noted as having ended their probationary period on May 13, 1866.

John Boring was listed as P. E. and T. J. Pope as P. C. in the minutes of September 30, 1871. No roll was given in the September 10, 1873 record, which lists William Roberson as P. E. and G. W. Martin as P. C., with an additional note, "For 1874 A. F. Frazier, P. E. and G. W. Martin, P. C." This roll bears 143 names. This writer remembers having seen 36 of this number! Zeb Baird, father of Henry Baird, and his sister, Kittie, appear for the first time. One member was listed as having "Joined the Campbellites." The names of Captain W. E. Weaver and his wife, Hannah, parents of the late Congressman Zeb Weaver appear for the first time on the roll.

The record of October 5, 1875 shows A. J. Frazier as P. E. and S. V. Bates as P. C., with R. E. Hutrell as Jr. The death of the Rev. John S. Weaver was noted. One member was listed as "Expelled," with no reason given. Four had "Gone to the Protestants."

The roll for 1876 does not have the usual admonition, nor does it list the ministers. There were 111 on this roll, with Miss Mollie Baird having joined with her sister, Kittie, and brother, Zeb. The final entry reads, "Look for the new preacher on the fourth Sunday in November at 11 o'clock a.m."

The register for 1880 lists J. R. Payne as P. C., with J. R. Kennedy as P. E. The pages are headed, "Register of Members of the M. E. Church, South, at Weaverville, North Carolina." One hundred and thirty-five names are entered. The name of the Rev. Montraville Weaver shows, "Deceased" beside it. Maggie A. McDowell Siler was added to the roll of February 10, 1882. The beloved Mrs. Siler taught a private school for many years and was a teacher in what is now the Primary School in the early 1920's.

K. C. Atkins, P. E. and L. K. Haynes, P. C. signed the admonition of the February 16, 1885 minutes. There were 184 names on this list. On the last roll in the book starting in 1851 appears a name that was to mean much to this church and community. It is Marion A. Yost, who came to Weaverville College from Asbury Academy in Virginia in September, 1884. For two years he was professor of Latin and Greek at the college. After an absence of one year he returned to Weaverville and became president of the college in 1888, serving in that capacity for ten years. He continued his association with the college until 1919. He was very active in the church and was greatly beloved and highly respected by all who knew him. His death occurred on Easter Sunday in 1927.

In the year of 1885 the roll lists the names of William Humphrey and Laura J. Reeves and their daughters, Leila and Effie. Effie, later to become Mrs. Gay Green, never forgot her early ties with this church. She became one of its greatest benefactors until the time of her death in 1969. Calvin H. Reeves, her brother and father of Mrs. Glayds R. Lloyd, is listed as having joined the church on October 10, 1886, by profession of faith. Edwin S. Reeves was admitted on profession of faith on September 5, 1886. Beginning at the age of 13, Mr. Reeves' membership lasted until May 15, 1947, when it was terminated by his death.

The Salem Class roll book reports a church conference on January 10, 1891, at which time J. J. Reagan reported that the Board of Stewards of the Circuit had set the pastor's salary at $600, and $100 for the presiding elder, with this church to pay $260 and $100 respectively on the salaries. Mrs. Tolitha M. Pickens, Mrs.

Tobitah Weaver and Mrs. Ellen Byerly were appointed a committee on incidental expenses and charged with employing a sexton, as well as raising funds to pay for this service. This is the first time in the written history that female members were given any responsibility in the church. A further entry in the minutes dated April 11, 1891 lists as having joined the church by certificate Alice Hoofnagle Yost, mother of Marion F. Yost, and Jobe D. Barnard and Rebecca Barnard, grandparents of Patsy B. Nichols of the present congregation.

A book entitled Minutes of the Asheville District Conference states that the first session of this conference was held at Hendersonville beginning the 8th of August, 1867, with the Rev. G. Taylor, P. E., presiding and Gen. R. B. Vance as secretary. John S. Weaver, his uncle, M. M. Weaver and Dr. J. A. Reagan were among the delegates from the Asheville Circuit. Rev. R. W. Pickens was given as P. C. of the Catawba Circuit. The Rev. John S. Weaver conducted the religious services on the afternoon of the second day, and the Rev. R. W. Pickens conducted the afternoon service of the third day. Dr. J. A. Reagan was elected as a delegate to the Annual Conference.

Bishop Wightman was in the chair when the second District Conference met at Salem on May 22, 1868. John S. Weaver, M. M. Weaver, Dr. J. A. Reagan and J. H. Calfee were delegates from this charge. An informal recess was taken on Friday afternoon to allow the members to attend the funeral of Mary A. Baird.

The Committee on Memoirs submitted a report from which this excerpt was taken: "Since our last meeting the Rev. Jacob Weaver has been called from his labors among us to his reward in the Kingdom of God. Our brother was born the 13th of September 1786 - was married December 12, 1811 - professed religion in the fall of 1812 and united with the M. E. Church - appointed class leader the next year and soon thereafter was licensed as a local preacher. In the separation he went most willingly with the Southern Division of the Church. He died after a painful and protracted sickness April 6, 1868, aged 81 years, 6 months and 13 days. He was a useful minister and was blessed of God with a long life and good health." He is buried in the old Weaver cemetery above the home now occupied by Miss Minnie Weaver.

At the last session a committee was appointed to locate "a primary school of high grade in our bounds." In response to the work of this committee it was noted that "Reems Creek offers a frame building with rooms already seated and arranged for immediately opening a school, with sufficient lands for all necessary purposes, together with a cash subscription of over a thousand dollars." Mills River and Asheville also submitted offers and it was decided to have the committee report to the conference at the next session to decide on definite action.

The third meeting of the District Conference was held at Mills River on August 13, 1869, with the Rev. John Boring, P. E., presiding. Dr. J. A. Reagan and J. H. Calfee represented this circuit.

The special committee on the establishment of a male school of high grade reported that they had decided not to consider any point that had not secured subscriptions of at least $3,000 and, since no location had met this requirement, no recommendation was made. It was ordered that the subject be tabled.

John Boring, P. E. presided over the November 17, 1870 session in Asheville, with R. W. Pickens and Dr. J. A. Reagan representing this circuit. Dr. Reagan noted "I suppose the Committee on Publications lost or mislaid the minutes, as they never returned them."

The August 15, 1872 session met at Bakersville with the Rev. John Boring again presiding as P. E., R. W. Pickens, J. A. Reagan and J. S. Weaver represented this charge. The Committee on Education, under the chairmanship of Dr. J. A. Reagan submitted this resolution, "We would respectfully suggest Reems Creek as the

location for the following reasons: 1st, It is nearer to the center of the district than any other point, 2nd, Its location is healthy, the settlement moral and Methodistic, 3rd, It has the advantage of the camps of Salem Camp Ground, where young men, who desire to do so, may board themselves, in full view of the teachers' house, 4th, There is a house and garden for a teacher and roomy buildings where the school can commence at once." This resolution was adopted unanimously by the conference. The name of Asheville District High School was adopted as a part of the resolution. Dr. J. A. Reagan, Dr. J. W. Vandiver, Rev. J. S. Weaver, Rev. R. W. Pickens and W. R. Chambers were among those named as Trustees.

Salem Church was the site of the session beginning June 27, 1872, with the Rev. William Robeson, P. E. presiding. Dr. J. A. Reagan was elected secretary. The Rev. J. S. Weaver, Rev. M. M. Weaver, Rev. J. W. Vandiver, W. R. Chambers, W. B. Cheek, J. G. Chambers, J. D. Barnard, W. E. Weaver and Robert H. Weaver were listed as delegates from Salem. Upon the motion of the Rev. John Boring the name of the new school was changed to "Weaverville."

The appearance of Bishop Doggett was the highlight of the second day. The Rev. G. W. Martin of the Asheville Circuit reported that he had 13 appointments and had 8 local preachers. He further stated that the "local preachers do not preach as much as they could and should do." The Rev. Robeson reported that he had been nearly three times around the district, and that all appointments had been met, with three exceptions, when rain and high water had prevented the minister from reaching the church.

Salem Church was the host for the June 27, 1873 meeting, with William Robeson, P. E. in the chair. Dr. J. A. Reagan was elected secretary and the Rev. G. W. Martin was present as P. C. The Rev. John S. Weaver, Rev. M. M. Weaver, Rev. R. W. Pickens, Rev. J. W. Vandiver, J. D. Barnard, W. B. Cheek, W. R. Chambers, J. G. Chambers, W. E. Weaver and R. H. Weaver represented the local church. Bishop Doggett came to the meeting on the second day. In his report the Rev. Martin stated that half of his appointments were on week days and that he had 600 to 700 members. He added, "Some have professed holiness of heart, others are praying for it."

The Rev. G. W. Martin was listed as P. C. when the July 9, 1874 meeting was held in Asheville, with the Rev. A. J. Frazier as P. E. Rev. R. W. Pickens and Dr. J. A. Reagan represented this circuit. The Rev. Martin reported that class meetings were generally neglected, except at Salem Church and he had five good Sunday Schools. The Rev. R. W. Pickens, agent for Weaverville High School, said he had done all he could in taking up collections, subscriptions and in trying to get students. J. D. Barnard and William Hyder, lay delegates from this circuit, joined the meeting on the second day. Dr. J. A. Reagan was elected as a delegate to Annual Conference.

Hendersonville was the site of the July 8, 1875 meeting, with the Rev. J. E. Frazier, P. E. presiding. Dr. J. A. Reagan was chosen as secretary. This area was represented by Rev. M. M. Weaver, Rev. John S. Weaver, H. B. Weaver, C. P. Weaver, Rev. J. W. Vandiver and W. B. Cheek. Rev. S. V. Bates was listed as P. C. Dr. Reagan offered a resolution of sorrow over the death of the Rev. G. W. Martin, former pastor of the circuit.

"Weaverville Circuit" made its first appearance in the official minutes of the meeting held in Brevard, beginning June 2, 1876. Rev. J. H. Robertson was given as P. C. Dr. J. A. Reagan, J. S. Kennedy and J. S. T. Baird were the delegates listed. Rev. William B. Lyda was noted as being on the Catawba Circuit, while the Rev. R. W. Pickens was P. C. of the Hendersonville charge. Regarding the Weaverville Circuit, the Rev. Robertson stated, "Spiritually the church is cold." Dr. J. A. Reagan served as secretary of the meeting.

July 26, 1877 was the date of the meeting in Bakersville, with the Rev. A. J. Frazier, P. E. in the chair. It was noted that the Rev. J. H. Robertson had given up his work on the Weaverville Circuit, because of ill health. The Rev. J. S. Kennedy was listed as P. C. Dr. J. A. Reagan was again secretary. J. S. T. Baird, John Clontz, W. Wild, and R. F. Baker were delegates.

The District Conference again returned to Weaverville for its August 22, 1878 meeting. Rev. J. S. Kennedy had been elevated to P. E. and the Rev. W. B. Lyda as P. C. Dr. J. A. Reagan was secretary, with J. S. T. Baird as assistant. W. H. Reeves was the delegate from the Leicester Circuit. Rev. M. M. Weaver, T. M. Dula, Dr. J. W. Vandiver, W. R. Chambers, J. S. McElroy, John Clontz and William Hyder were among the local delegates present. The Rev. Lyda reported that he could not see any improvement in the spiritual condition of the church.

On the 15th day of May, 1879 the conference again met in Hendersonville, with the Rev. J. S. Kennedy, P. E. in the chair. W. B. Hyder and Elbert Chambers were delegates from this charge. Rev. S. S. Weatherly was the new P. C. and he reported that he could not see much improvement in the spiritual condition of his charge, except in an increased attendance on public worship. He said that "Mission work was in a sickly condition and the financial condition was tolerably good."

Turkey Creek Camp Ground was the site of the August 12, 1880 session. The Rev. J. S. Kennedy, P. E. presided. The Rev. J. R. Payne was listed as P. C. and Dr. J. A. Reagan, Rev. M. M. Weaver and Rev. J. W. Vandiver as licensed ministers. The lay delegates were W. J. Clontz, C. B. Way, Elbert Chambers, W. B. Hyder and Jesse Gwaltney. The Rev. Payne reported that there were 11 societies and 448 church members, three local preachers and sacraments administered in four places. He said that $145 had been paid on the P. C.'s salary of $375, and $33.50 on the P. E. salary of $75. Dr. J. A. Reagan was again elected as delegate to Annual Conference.

Burnsville was chosen as the place of the June 30, 1881 meeting, with the Rev. J. S. Kennedy, P. E. presiding. In the absence of the Rev. W. B. Lyda, P. C., the circuit was represented by Dr. J. A. Reagan, C. B. Way, T. M. Cole, W. D. Hyder, and Dr. W. Latta Reagan, son of Dr. J. A. Reagan. The report of the pastor in charge was read stating that there are 13 appointments on the circuit and that attendance was very good. "Some exercise of discipline was needed," he said, "the greater part arising from whiskey." Not quite 50 percent of the salaries had been paid.

On July 27, 1882 the District Conference met at the Big Ivy Church, with the Rev. K. C. Atkins, P. E. presiding. Rev. W. B. Lyda was P. C. of the Weaverville Circuit and C. B. Way and W. D. Hyder were delegates. Dr. J. A. Reagan was present as a licensed elder. W. H. Reeves was in attendance as a delegate from Leicester. The Rev. Lyda reported that the Weaverville Sunday School had an average attendance of 65 from a roll of 120. The Rev. R. W. Pickens reported from the Cranberry Charge.

Bishop A. W. Wilson presided over the April 5, 1883 session held at Mills River. The Rev. W. P. Doane was listed as P. C. of the Weaverville Circuit. He stated, "Spiritual condition of the charge not what it ought to be. General state of condition tolerably good. Have fourteen appointments. Takes one month to make the round. There are 571 members." The name of Eugene Blake appears on the roll. He was later to become president of Weaver College.

Bishop Hargrove presided at the August 14, 1884 session at Marshall. Dr. J. A. Reagan was elected secretary. The Rev. W. P. Doane was still the P. C. of this circuit. C. B. Way, J. A. Gwaltney, W. J. Clontz and W. E. Weaver were in attendance as delegates. Dr. J. A. Reagan was again elected as delegate to Annual Conference. Bishop Hargrove arrived on the second day and took the chair to preside.

W. H. Reeves came the second day as delegate from Leicester. Weaverville was selected as the site of the first Sunday School Convention.

Bakersville was chosen as the place for the August 13, 1885 session of the District Conference. Rev. L.K. Haynes was P. C. of the circuit. Dr. Daniel Atkins was in attendance as president of Weaverville College. Dr. J. A. Reagan was listed as local preacher and as recording steward. Dr. H. B. Weaver was the lay delegate from this charge. In reporting of the Weaverville Circuit, the Rev. Haynes stated "There are about 560 members - there are only four Sunday Schools under our own church control, with about 250 members, but there are 14 union Sunday Schools, 11 of which are under the superintendance of our own members." He further stated, "There are a few members who drink intoxicating liquors, contrary to our Discipline."

Bishop H. N. McTyeire arrived on the second day of the meeting. Bishop A. W. Wilson was also present at this session. Dr. H. B. Weaver invited the next session to meet at Weaverville and the invitation was accepted.

On August 26, 1888 the conference met in Weaverville, with the Rev. L. K. Haynes as P. C. Dr. J. A. Reagan attended as a local preacher. Dr. C. P. West, great, great grandfather of Jennifer and Jeffrey Davis, along with J. E. Rheim, one time mayor of Weaverville, C. E. Chambers, C. B. Way and J. R. DuBose were delegates. Bishop R. K. Hargrove presided. The report of the Rev. Haynes was not recorded this time.

Burnsville was the meeting place of the July 28, 1887 session. Rev. C. T. Carroll, P. E. presided. Rev. J. F. Austin, P. C., Rev. J. C. Postel, Jr., preacher, Rev. J. B. Hyder, L. P., C. B. Way, H. L. King, W. D. Hyder, James F. Pickens and C. C. Brown represented the Weaverville Circuit. The Rev. Austin reported that the Weaverville Circuit had four houses of worship, 13 preaching places, and some 680 members. Average attendance on preaching was 350. Twenty infants and been baptized. Three hundred and twenty-eight dollars had been paid on the preacher's salary of $650 and $49 on the $112 salary of the presiding elder. It was noted that there was a parsonage in Weaverville, but it was not in good repair.

Bishop William W. Duncan presided at the Hendersonville session on June 28, 1888. Rev. J. F. Austin, P. C., Dr. J. A. Reagan, L. E., Rev. J. W. Vandiver, L. D., C. B. Way, C. E. Chambers, H. L. King, W. D. Hyder, C. M. Pickens, J. M. Johnson, W. J. Clontz, J. R. Gryder and B. F. Morris represented the circuit. The Rev. Austin reported, "Spiritual conditions tolerably good. Thirteen preaching places, four church houses of our own. Baptized 25 infants. Some members not in favor of infant baptism. Have a parsonage. No uniform financial plan. All assessments are about $1,000, but don't think they will all be paid. 750 members of the church."

The Rev. W. B. Lyda was listed as the P. C. when the July 18, 1889 session met at Mont Morency (six) in Buncombe County, under the direction of Rev. C. T. Carroll, P. E. Dr. J. A. Reagan was listed as clerical delegate, with C. C. Brown as lay delegate. No report from the circuit appears in the record.

"The territory embraced in the Asheville District was first supplied by preachers in the South Carolina Conference. When the Holston Conference was formed in 1824 it was made a part of that Conference and supplied by preachers from that Conference until May 1890, when the General Conference formed a new conference called the Western North Carolina Conference, when the Asheville District became a part and parcel of said Conference. The present session of the District Conference is the twenty-fifth, but the first session of the new conference." Thus reads the minutes book of the Asheville District Conference which met in Brevard on May 10, 1890.

The Weaverville Circuit was represented by Rev. J. A. Clark, P. C., Dr. J. A. Reagan, secretary, Rev. J. W. Vandiver, Dr. C. P. West, C. B. Way, C. E. Chambers, T. M. Cole, L. P., J. F. Austin, agent for Weaverville College, W. D. Hyder, W. J. Cloztz, J. F. Pickens and J. R. Gryder.

The time of the meeting was fixed at "8½ o'clock a.m. Railraod time and adjourns at 11 o'clock a.m. for preaching. For evening service meet at 2½ o'clock and adjourn at the pleasure of the conference."

The Rev. J. A. Clarke reported for the Weaverville Circuit, "Spiritual state of the church tolerably good. Have had two revivals - 84 conversions - 76 accessions. Congregations reasonably good. Most of the church houses well kept. Six hundred children in Sunday School."

Prof. M. A. Yost, Dr. J. A. Reagan and J. F. Austin represented the interests of Weaverville College. The Committee on Records commented on the Weaverville Circuit, "The minutes are too closely crowded together in some places as if stingy of paper."

The Weaverville College Chapel was the site of the August 29, 1891 session, with the Rev. J. T. Stover as P. C. The Rev. Stover had married Flora Pickens, daughter of the Rev. R. W. Pickens. He and his wife, along with the Rev. Pickens, are buried in the old Weaverville Cemetery.

On July 21, 1892 the session met in Old Fort, with the Rev. T. E. Wagg as P. C. Dr. C. P. West, C. E. Chambers and J. R. DuBose were the delegates. For reasons not given, Dr. J. A. Reagan was not present.

The Committee on Education reported on Weaverville College, stating, "Situated nine miles north of Asheville, a convenient and safe distance from Railroads and other distracting influences, on a high plateau proverbial for its healthfulness. . .under the control of a truly religious (Methodist) faculty and surrounded by the atmosphere of a religious community." One hundred and eight-five were enrolled during the preceding year.

Dr. J. A. Reagan answered the roll call of the session held at Mills River on July 29, 1893, along with Dr. C. P. West, J. S. T. Baird and J. E. Rheim. Rev. T. E. Wagg was again the pastor in charge.

The Committee on Education reported that Weaverville College had 220 students enrolled and that, "In a gracious revival of religion in which nearly every student not religious professed a saving faith in Christ." A note was made that, "The records of the Circuit were neatly and faithfully kept."

Hendersonville was the site of the July 12, 1894 session. The Rev. T. E. Wagg reported as pastor of the circuit, with C. E. Chambers, J. R. DuBose, W. D. Hyder and Dr. J. A. Reagan as delegates. The Committee on Records noted that the Weaverville Circuit records were, "a model of neatness and accuracy."

Montmorenci hosted the July 25, 1895 conference. The Rev. L. E. Stacy was the new pastor of the Weaverville Circuit. His son, Marvin, an alumnus of Weaverville College, was acting president of the University of North Carolina at the time of his death. Another son, Walter P. Stacy, served as Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court. The Rev. Stacy reported, "The spiritual condition of the church is fairly good. Sunday Schools in good condition - two Women's Missionary Societies - one Young People's Society. Two Light Bearers. The finances not as good as they should be." The records were found to be "very neatly and correctly kept."

Bishop W. W. Duncan presided over the July 30, 1896 gathering which met at Hot Springs. H. L. King and J. E. Rheim were present, and T. M. Cole and Sol Carter joined them on the second day. Illness prevented the Rev. Stacy from attending. "Some erasures otherwise neatly kept," was the comment on the records of the circuit.

The Weaverville Methodist Church was host to the August 5, 1897 meeting, which was led by Bishop J. S. Key. Dr. J. A. Reagan headed our delegation, which included Dr. C. P. West, C. E. Chambers, and H. L. King. The Rev. W. H. Willis, who was later to become presiding elder of the Asheville District, reported this, "My chief difficulties in the Hendersonville Charge are inconsisent living and disorganization, due to the influx of summer visitors." Later the Willises lived in the district parsonage, which stood on the lot where Mrs. Emma Gwaltney's home now is.

The Rev. Stacy reported, "The Weaverville Circuit has to battle against indifference. . . .the feebleness of small organizations and the inconvenient size of the charge to be served." It was reported that Weaverville College had 228 pupils and had graduated a class of six. The circuit records the accolade, "Kept with unusual neatness."

The August 4, 1898 session was held at Asheville's Bethel Church, with the Rev. Stacy heading a delegation of six, Dr. J. A. Reagan, J. G., C. E. Chambers, J. L. Gryder, H. L. King, Albert S. Weaver, and Rev. William B. Lyda. Leading the Biltmore Church was the Rev. R. G. Tuttle, who later lived in the district parsonage on Church Street. He was the father of the Rev. Robert G. Tuttle, Jr., former district superintendent, who retired in 1978 after 45 years in the ministry.

Hendersonville was the place chosen for the District meeting held on June 15, 1899. The Rev. R. M. Taylor was the new minister of the Weaverville Circuit. His daughter later married J. Roy Reagan, son of Dr. J. A. Reagan. She is buried in the old Weaverville cemetery, near the grave of her husband and daughter, Josephine R. Duncan. The Rev. Taylor reported that the circuit was too large, covering 140 square miles, with 11 appointments. He said that he had made 225 visits in 175 families. C. E. Chambers, H. L. King, J. J. Reagan and Edgar Gwaltney were our delegates.

On July 26, 1900 the Conference met at Old Fort, with the Rev. Taylor, Dr. J. A. Reagan, C. E. Chambers and Edgar Gwaltney in attendance. L. B. Abernathy, later to become president of Weaverville College, was given his license to preach. The journals of the Weaverville circuit were found to need no criticism. The Rev. Taylor reported, "The spiritual condition is fair. Many of our people attend church only occasionally. This charge should be divided, making Weaverville and one or two other points one charge. The remainder should be made a mission."

Bishop R. K. Hargrove presided over a session held in Burnsville on August 8, 1901. The Rev. E. K. McLarty, father of our former pastor, the Rev. James B. McLarty, was a member of the conference. W. H. Reeves, Dr. C. P. West and Dr. J. A. Reagan were delegates. James M. Robeson, president of Weaverville College, was in attendance.

The newly created Weaverville Station hosted the 1902 session beginning on August 7. Bishop A. Coke Smith presided. The Rev. A. W. Plyler reported for the new station. Dr. J. A. Reagan, I. V. Baird and C. E. Chambers were delegates.

Mount Pleasant Church of the Weaverville Circuit, entertained the August 6, 1903 session. Dr. J. A. Reagan, the Rev. R. W. Pickens and J. R. DuBose accompanied the Rev. Plyler to the meeting. Bishop Duncan was present. The Weaverville station records were noted as having contained several errors in spelling.

The delegates to the August 5, 1904 session in Biltmore were W. H. Reeves, A. H. Weaver, J. B. Lotspeich, J. M. Whittemore and Dr. C. P. West. W. E. Clarke, grandfather of Phil Wilde and Addie Lou Weaver, was a delegate from the Weaverville Circuit. Dr. C. P. West was elected as a delegate to Annual Conference. The first time the record makes any mention of a woman as speaker is noted when Miss Mattie Perry of the Elkhannon Institute was introduced to the conference and spoke on her work among destitute children.

On July 20, 1905 the Asheville District Conference convened at the new debt-free Barnardsville Church, which was to be dedicated the following Sunday. The Rev. A. W. Plyler had been promoted from this charge to the office of presiding elder of the district, and he presided at the meeting.

A resolution of thanks was given by the conference to F. M. Weaver, brother of Mrs. Emma Shean of this community, for his generous gift of a copy of Dr. John R. Mott's book, The Pastor and Missions, to each pastor in the Asheville District. The conference adopted a resolution of congratulations to Dr. J. A. Reagan and his good wife, Mary A. E. Reagan, for the doctor's long life of service and loyalty to the church.

The Rev. A. W. Plyler, District presiding elder, was in charge of the session held in Hendersonville beginning on May 24, 1906. The Rev. L. B. Abernathy, president of Weaverville College, along with Dr. J. A. Reagan, W. H. Reeves and R. P. Brittain were delegates. Phoenicia Brittain, son of R. P. Brittain and brother of Miss Minevia Brittain, was given his license to preach. D. B. Williams of Bald Creek, grandfather of J. Donald Williams, was given his license to preach also. He later became a member of this church.

Weaverville was the site of the District Conference from August 1 to 4, 1907. Among those present were Rev. W. B. Lyda, and R. W. Pickens as superannuates, Dr. J. A. Reagan and Phoenicia Brittain as local preachers. A. S. Weaver, J. B. Lotspeich, E. S. Reeves, M. A. Yost, and Dr. C. P. West were delegates. J. A. Gwaltney, R. P. Brittain, W. E. Clark and W. H. Hunter represented the Weaverville Circuit. The Rev. A. W. Plyler presided.

In his report to the conference the Rev. Plyler made this observation, "Many in the country churches stay away from the communion table. Some who glory in our broad doctrine in regard to this sacrament and would draw a lance with any antagonist, do not come to the Lord's Table. And so frequently occurs among us mortals, their doctrine is better than their practice." The Rev. W. G. Crutchfield was mentioned as being the pastor of this charge. It was also noted that at 10:30 a.m. Bishop James Atkins arrived and "immediately entered upon the presidency of the meeting."

On the second morning C. H. Trowbridge, later to be the final president of Weaver College, was introduced as headmaster of Brevard Institute. Prof. Trowbridge finished his long career in education as the first president of Brevard College.

The report of the Committee on Education makes this note regarding Weaverville College, "An excellent corps of teachers insures every pupil the best grade of instruction. While the moral atmosphere of the community is such that the character of a student is as safely guarded in the institution as at home."

In "Reports of Local Preachers" Phoenicia Brittain wrote, "I have been in school and my opportunity for preaching has been limited. Have been active in all church work." Dr. J. A. Reagan reported, "I have been afflicted all the year, but have preached six times. Have attended religious services when able."

On July 23-24, 1908 the Conference met at Marshall, with Dr. J. C. Rowe as Presiding Elder and the Rev. G. W. Crutchfield as pastor of the Weaverville charge. The Rev. Phoenicia Brittain and Rev. D. B. Williams were listed as local preachers, along with Dr. J. A. Reagan, Rev. W. B. Lyda and Rev. R. W. Pickens as superannuates in Weaverville. Dr. C. P. West, W. H. Reeves, J. B. Lotspeich, A. S. Weaver and E. H. Penley were listed as lay delegates.

Dr. J. A. Reagan gave the opening prayer and then said, "Owing to afflictions I have not been able to preach but twice during the present year, but now feel able to do more." He also reported on the Asheville District parsonage located on Church Street, stating that the property consisted of one and one-half acres, orchard, garden, well and out-houses, all valued at $2,500, with insurance in the amount of $1,000. The Rev. D. B. Williams, reporting as local preacher, states, "I have one regular appointment and I preach at other times when I have the opportunity. . .I have assisted the pastor in all the revival work in his pastoral charge this year. I also do some Sunday School work and work in prayer meetings."

May 27-30, 1909 was the date of the session held in Tryon with the Rev. Dan Atkins, P. E. in the chair. The Rev. T. E. Smiley was the minister of the local charge, with Dr. J. A. Reagan and Rev. D. B. Williams listed as local preachers. The Rev. R. W. Pickens and Rev. W. B. Lyda were recorded on the Superannuate Roll. Dr. C. P. West, J. B. Lotspeich, W. H. Reeves, M. A. Yost and Lucius Weaver, brother of Miss Minnie Weaver, were the lay delegates. The Rev. Smiley reported, "A new Sunday School Class organized at the Monticello School House, two revivals with 40 conversions, and good conditions prevailing in Sunday School and League work." The Rev. Smiley did not find it noteworthy that he had baptized the writer only a few weeks previously!

The report on Education stated that the Rev. O. S. Dean had been elected as the new president of Weaverville College and that Prof. M. A. Yost and Miss Lassie Reeves had been retained on the faculty.

The final entry regarding Dr. J. A. Reagan came in the statement that he, along with the Rev. Smiley and Dr. Dan Atkins, presented the interests of Weaverville College. Dr. Reagan died on October 24, 1910, ending a period of service to the church which had begun in 1850.

Roll of Ministers Who Served Weaverville Circuit 1851-1901

1851 - J. A. Reagan
1852 - W. F. Parker
1853 - John D. Baldwin
1854 - John D. Baldwin
1858 - L. C. Delasmith
1861 - H. P. Waugh
1866 - Jacob R. Payne
1867 - W. M. Kerr
1868 - B. F. White
1870 - T. J. Pope
1871 - T. J. Pope
1872 - G. W. Martin
1873 - G. W. Martin
1874 - G. W. Martin
1875 - S. V. Bates
1876 - J. H. Robertson
1877 - J. H. Robertson &
J. S. Kennedy
1878 - W. B. Lyda
1879 - S. S. Weatherly
1880 - J. R. Payne
1881 - W. B. Lyda
1882 - W. B. Lyda
1883 - W. P. Doane
1884 - W. P. Doane
1885 - L. K. Haynes
1886 - L. K. Haynes
1887 - J. F. Austin
1888 - J. F. Austin
1889 - W. B. Lyda
1890 - J. A. Clark
1891 - J. T. Stover
1892 - T. E. Wagg
1893 - T. E. Wagg
1894 - T. E. Wagg
1895 - L. E. Stacy
1896 - L. E. Stacy
1897 - L. E. Stacy
1898 - L. E. Stacy
1899 - R. M. Taylor
1900 - R. M. Taylor
1901 - R. M. Taylor

Roll of Ministers Who Served Weaverville Station 1902-1978

1902 - 1905 A. W. Plyler
1906 - 1908 G. W. Crutchfield
1909 T. E. Smiley
1910 - 1912 W. E. Poovey
1913 J. H. West
1914 - 1917 E. W. Fox
1918 - 1919 O. J. Jones
1920 - 1921 O. P. Ader
1922 - 1925 B. C. Reavis
1926 - 1927 D. W. Brown
1928 J. S. Gibbs
1929 - 1932 A. P. Ratledge
1933 - 1934 B. M. Crosby
1935 - 1938 Frank Smathers
1939 - 1940 Harold Groce
1941 - 1945 Fred O. Dryman
1946 - 1950 P. S. Kennett
1951 - 1952 L. A. Harper
1953 - 1956 John A. Lowder
1957 - 1960 R. P. Waugh
1961 - 1966 L. B. Laye
1967 - 1968 J. B. McLarty
1969 - 1972 D. Bryce Parker
1973 - 1975 Don A. Payne*
1976 T. H. Swofford**
1976 - Dayle Groh***

* Died November 29, 1975
** Balance of Conference year
*** Minister at time history was written

Note: No records available for years not listed

BURIAL PLACES OF MINISTERS

Old Weaverville Cemetery

Rev. W. B. Lyde*
Rev. Andrew Pickens
Rev. Robert W. Pickens*
Rev. J. T. Stover*
Rev. W. F. Parker*
Rev. J. A. Reagan, M. D.*
Rev. M. M. Weaver, L. P.

Clark's Chapel Cemetery

Rev. Phoenicia Brittain

Jones Cemetery, Ox Creek

Rev. Don A. Payne*

Jacob Weaver Cemetery

Rev. Jacob Weaver, L. P.
Rev. John S. Weaver

West Memorial Park

Rev. Paul S. Kennett*
Rev. C. W. Bates
Rev. Homer Casto
Rev. W. C. Clark (M.P.)*
Rev. John H. Swain
Rev. D. B. Williams, L. P.

* Served this church

1900 - 1978

Louise A. Wright

Part I 1900-1929

The year of 1902 was an historic time for the Weaverville Methodist Church, for this was the year when Weaverville became a station church. The quarterly Conference record shows an official roll written in a fine Spencerian handwriting, "Weaverville Charge, Asheville District, Western North Carolina Conference, Rev. R. H. Parker, Presiding Elder, Rev. A. W. Plyler, P. C." (Pastor in charge). The names of members attending the Conference were given, as were the stewards and trustees. Many of these names were people who played a major role in Methodism in this area. All are people who have gone down in this church's history.

These included Dr. James Americus Reagan, Rev. Robert Wesley Pickens, William Humphrey Reeves, Dr. Charles P. West, J. D. Barnard, Prof. J. J. Reagan, Rufus Weaver, Prof. M. A. Yost, Ed F. Vandiver, A. S. Weaver, Sunday School Superintendent, W. E. Weaver and Tom Hale Weaver, Trustees. Dr. J. A. Reagan served as secretary of the Conference.

The preacher's salary was $550 per year. They paid the presiding elder $60 annually and the Bishop $8.26 per year. They had paid $22.71 on Conference Claims, $57.82 for foreign missions, $33.04 for domestic missions, $15 for Church Extension and $20.65 for education. The total year's budget was $1,011.20. $1,011.20.

There were two Epworth Leagues, a Senior and a Junior League, with 42 members. The officers of the former were Bonnie Reagan, vice-president, Minnie Lyda, secretary, E. S. Reeves, treasurer, and Lassie Reeves, organist. There were 144 in Sunday School at the time. They had two Sunday Schools, one at the Church and one at Weaverville College.

During these early years there was a very active Children's Missionary Society under the leadership of Mrs. C. C. Brown. The children met monthly in her home or at the church, participating in local and district activities. Mrs. Brown was honored for her years of faithful guidance of the children. She was affectionately called "Aunt Sally."

The seriousness with which members went about their church work is revealed in the old records. The pastor listed the names of all who had joined the church during the year, as well as the names of those who had died. One question asked by the P. E. was, "What are you doing for American Bible Society?" and the recorded answer was, "Nothing yet." Another question was, "Have local preachers and exhorters passed examination of character and have exhorters' licenses been renewed?" And their names were carefully recorded as "passed" or "renewed." An exhorter was one who issued the alter call at a revival service and urged people to respond.

There must have been a good spirit in the group, for it is written, "As already known, all assessments will be paid in full and this Charge stands ready to pay its part of any deficiency in the Asheville District." The pastor wrote, "We close the year with a membership in the main interested in the welfare of the church.

They attend upon its ordinances and support its institutions. In them are seen also other marks of piety and Christian living."

They valued their church property at $2,500, but carried no insurance. They kept their deed in a locked trunk at Dr. J. A. Reagan's house. The value of the station and circuit parsonages was $2,000.

In 1903 many details were given about the year's work. The total budget was $999.20, or an average annual giving of $5.01 per member. The pastor reported, "All church services have been held regularly during the present months, with a good degree of success, no disorder anywhere in the congregation."

They elected four delegates to the Annual District Conference. The Weaverville "Forget-Me-Not Missionary Society" was mentioned as having been organized in 1901, with Lucy Reeves as president. This society was mentioned in Elmer Clark's book, Methodism in Western North Carolina. It had 12 members and sent $5.41 to missions. There is a record of the Weaverville Auxiliary Missionary Society, with Mrs. R. W. Pickens as president and Mrs. C. C. Brown as secretary.

By 1904 the total budget had climbed to $1,005.57 and a new Missionary Society called the "Golden Links" was mentioned. The matter of the division of parsonage property came up for discussion. Dr. J. A. Reagan presented a legal paper saying, "Whereas Weaverville Circuit and Station have been divided and formed two separate charges; and whereas when they were one charge a parsonage was erected in the town of Weaverville, what is now the two charges and each contributing to the building. But the lot and building were largely paid for by the class of Weaverville. Therefore resolved, that the Quarterly Conference appoint one of its members to visit the Quarterly Conference of the Circuit and ask that body to appoint a member of its body, and that they agree upon a third man and that the testimony be heard by them and the terms arranged for settlement between the two bodies, as the Discipline directs."

The Charge paid $707 on a liquidation debt of Weaverville College. The trustees reported on the District Parsonage from which they had received $174.50 in rent and had paid out $144.84 in expenses. The Circuit seemed to have some interest in the District parsonage, too, but their minds were "unsettled," reported the trustees.

The year of 1905 was the last year that the Rev. A. W. Plyler was minister. The church had a membership of 201, with a total budget of $1,721.40. The pastor wrote one quarter, "None have died. None withdrawn. None expelled." He paid tribute to Prof. M. A. Yost, "I have been impressed with the promptness and quiet earnestness of our Sunday School Superintendent Brother Yost, who is always on hand and never closes without an intelligent, interesting review of the lesson."

In another place, the Rev. Plyler wrote, "We regret to say that rumors have come to us of crookedness in certain quarters and these will receive due attention in due time in the quarter." He then added, "We trust the coming quarter will be remembered by a genuine reveval and that the report will present a church without spot or wrinkle, or such thing."

About schools he wrote, "The almost entire patronage of our people who have patronized any school has been given to our own Weaverville College. 1 has attended Trinity College, 1 Davenport College, 1 Chapel Hill; Our people are distinctly Methodist and plan themselves and their children under that sort of education."

The church was a wooden structure, built like many country churches of that era, with a steeple in front. It was erected in 1891 on the lot on Church Street where the present parsonage is now located.

There was a country school at Monticello, a one-room white wooden building near the intersection of the Alexander and Monticello roads. In this building a Sunday School was conducted for years, but the school was suspended in 1905.

There is a gap in the church records at this time. In the minutes of the Asheville District there is a record of the appointment of the Rev. J. H. West to the Weaverville Station for 1913. He stayed one year. The church listed 257 members and a budget of $2,784.90. There were 36 members of the Women's Missionary Society.

The Rev. E. W. Fox came to the church in 1914 and remained for four year. At the end of his tenure the church is listed in the District minutes as having 340 members, but this figure is questionable, for later in 1919 the membership was given as 301.

In 1917 tragedy struck the Weaverville Church. On July 4, 1917 lightning struck the steeple and the entire building was burned to the ground. Men responding to the fire call were able to save most of the furniture, the pump organ, the pulpit center and two rows of pews from either side of the church. Only the stone foundation was left standing. On this foundation was built the present parsonage. The ashes of the old church seemed so gray and desolate to the folks that even sixty years later those who rememberd the night spoke in hushed voices of the fire.

For church services the congregation went back to the auditorium of Weaver College.

A picture of the old wooden church is included in the book, Dry Ridge, by Nell Pickens.

The Tribe of Jacob in its 1917 reunion subscribed $1,200 to help rebuild a church. Eight year old William Reeves made the first pledge to the building fund for the new church.

Many members wanted to rebuild the church on the old stone foundation. Others, who had a greater vision of the changing times, preferred to locate the church on Main Street, a well travelled road in that day. There was a difference of opinion, but land given by Charles R. Moore and William H. Reeves was used for the new church.

In March 1919 the Board of Stewards records that "the Quarterly Conference requested that the Building Committee proceed at once to receive a lot and take difinite steps to build our church." W. M. Reagan, Dr. C. P. West, F. P. Roberts and J. B. Lotspeich were authorized to find a buyer for the old church site and report back to the next Quarterly Conference." The trustees reported that $4,000 had been spent on the church that year.

Plans were drawn for a nice brick structure. Will Robinson and Doug Roberts were the contractors. Charles R. Moore gave a large sum of money toward the building fund, but it was 1920 before the congregation could worship in a new church.

Mr. Moore died suddenly and his wife gave the beautiful stained glass window of the Good Shepherd as a memorial to him. It is said that the window was brought from Asheville to Weaverville in a horse drawn wagon. Years later, in 1976, it was discovered that this window was made of Tiffany glass. Mrs. Moore also gave the altar furniture and the pews for the church.

The Rev. O. J. Jones, pastor in 1918-19, wrote, "The church life is not what a pastor or the people would like to have it. The attendance is poor and there are scant evidences that in other respects the membership is interested in the

church. One of the discouraging things to the pastor is the fact that even the officials, with a few delightful exceptions, seem to be not greatly concerned. They attend seldom. We don't have our men at Prayer meetings. One of our prime needs is a revived interest in church attendance. Another thing we need is a greater good fellowship."

This was the year that the first two women were named to the Board of Stewards -Mrs. J. N. Gill and Miss Minnie Lyda. An offering to the Children's Home was noted for the first time. A gift of $21.98 was made to Syrian Relief. The prevalence of influenza caused suspension of the Sunday School at Pleasant Grove Church. E. S. Reeves was named Sunday School Superintendent in September, 1919 and served until 1945.

In December 1919 the Rev. O. P. Ader came as pastor. The church reported 301 members, with a total budget of $6,800 for the year. The Rev. Ader wrote, "We are joining the devoted members of this church in an earnest prayer that God may bless us graciously in the new church building enterprise and that we may be in our new church at an early date and may have at once a gracious revival in it."

At this Quarterly Conference it was moved that the former church lot be held as church property to be used as such and that the order for its sale be rescinded. Those present recommended that it be used for parsonage purposes. The trustees were authorized to apply for a loan of $5,000 from the Board of Church Extension to complete the new church. The Board was to have the loan secured by a mortgage on the property. Later in a notation, "We hope to be in our new church next Sunday. We have not been able to have a revival this year owing to our having no church house."

It was evidently Easter Sunday 1920 when the congregation officially moved in. In November the Rev. Ader wrote, "We are in our new church now and have hopes of increased interest in all lines of church activity." In 1920 the stewards authorized the trustees to borrow a sufficient amount to finish the parsonage, not to exceed $1,000.

A nationally known evangelist by the name of Cyclone Mack conducted a revival in this area in 1921 and preached to thousands of people. He was given a lot by Dr. J. M. Crawford of Weaverville and also a monetary gift of $73.

This was the year that the Rev. Henry B. Dendy came to Weaverville to establish a Presbyterian Church, with a nucleus of only ten members. In July 1922 the Baptists rented the auditorium of the Weaverville Grammer School to organize a Baptist Church with 46 charter members. This was an outgrowth of Baptist work done by eight women over a period of the two preceding years. Prior to this the two Methodist churches had been the only denomination in town.

Mrs. Clyde Hornaday, the former Mrs. Charles R. Moore, gave 20 acres of land to Weaver College, including Lake Juanita. The name was changed to Lake Louise in her honor. The gift was valued at $25,000.

Nineteen twenty-one was the year that the Weaver Family decided to place stained glass windows in the center section of the sanctuary, opposite the Moore window. The family raised the funds to place the window of Christ knocking at the door at a cost of $350, in memory of Montraville and Jane Eliza Baird Weaver. In 1925 they added the sower scattering seeds in memory of Jacob and Elizabeth Siler Weaver. In 1926 they placed the third window in memory of John and Elizabeth Biffle Weaver. The three sections made a window the size of the Good Shepherd window and were valued at $1,200, but a 1977 valuation reached many thousand dollars.

The basement of the new church was finished in 1922 to give added space for Sunday School rooms. All classes had been meeting in the sanctuary of the church. When the work was completed the Sunday School was departmentalized for the first time, and the classes were given graded literature. The College still had its Sunday School at the college.

The church had 364 members in 1922 and its budget reached $2,500, with the pastor's salary $1,125 per year. Mrs. C. C. Leonard was the third woman added to the Board. The Trustees reported that, "We have one and one-third church houses and one parsonage." There were three Missionary Societies, the Woman's, the Sarah Brown and a Young Ladies Society.

The Rev. B. C. Reavis served as pastor from 1922 to 1926. The church continued its growth in these years, but there are no records available for part of this time. There is an account of a Boy Scout Troop organized in the church in December 1925 and also a Camp Fire Girls' group. Both had camping trips that summer. A furnace was installed in the sanctuary along about this time, but there are no records as to the date.

In 1926 the Rev. Dwight Brown came as pastor for two years and the Rev. Henry C. Sprinkle was Presiding Elder. Plans to put a heating plant in the church were discussed. The church was well organized and working well. The Workers Council met monthly. There were four Epworth Leagues, a Senior, an Intermediate, a Junior League, plus a College League. Lengthy handwritten reports were recorded by the pastor. There were three Sunday Schools, at the church, at the college and at the little one-room school on the Monticello Road. Forty workers attended the Standard Training School of the Asheville District. The church had 401 members, with 190 in Sunday School. The Sunday School treasury was kept separate from that of the church.

In May 1927 Marion Yost, secretary, wrote, "As long as our Sunday School retains its present spirit of harmony, its enthusiasm, its fine cordiality and fellowship, its evident desire to be friendly and its willingness to give aid when help is needed, we may have no fears for its further progress and growth." They had a big Sunday School picnic that year.

A Standard of Efficiency was set up by the Conference and the Weaverville Sunday School was graded a "Progressive B" type. The 26 teachers worked hard to get the grade up to an A.

There seems to have been a new development in the Laymen's Movement within the church. Prof. C. H. Trowbridge, president of Weaver College, was listed as Lay Leader of the church. Two men attended a Laymen's Conference at Lake Junaluska, which emphasized Christian stewardship as the main work of laymen. The District minutes reported that there were Lay activities in one-half of the churches. In answer to a question asked at each Quarterly Conference, "Have the General Rules been read?" it is recorded, "Not yet, but will soon." It was the custom to have communion service on the first Sunday of each month. The church year was from October to October.

In 1928 the Rev. J. S. Gibbs came as pastor for one year. He initiated the first church-wide Bible study, "The Way of Jesus," and permitted oral reports at Quarterly Conference. This resulted in incomplete information for succeeding generations (and historians). The church membership was 439, with an annual budget of $5,511. There were 18 people on the Board of Stewards and three missionary groups, the Women's Missionary Society, the Young People's Missionary Society and the Reagan Circle, plus a Ladies Aid Society, who were mainly responsible for overseeing the adequate furnishing of the parsonage.

Dr. C. P. West died in November 1928. In his will he left $100 per year to the Methodist Church for a period of ten years. This legacy was one of the contributions that helped the church manage to balance its budget in the subsequent depression years.

The Rev. A. P. Ratledge came in 1929 for a four year term. He was married during his second year in Weaverville and his musically gifted wife became a great favorite of the Methodists. The pastor's salary was $2,100. Mrs. John V. Erskine was listed as a member of the Board of Stewards, thus beginning a period of faithful and dedicated service extending over 40 years.

The records point out the good work in the Sunday School and the Missionary Societies, the latter having 121 members. These societies had well planned programs of Bible study and Mission study each year. Miss Pearl Weaver and Mrs. Erskine were outstanding teachers of these classes.

Part II 1930-1954

The every day life of the people of Weaverville changed very little through the years. Most of the pioneer families had built large houses for their big families. As their children approached adulthood many of the families transformed their homes into boarding houses for summer guests from other regions. This was profitable, for all of them still had big farms and could grow their own vegetables. Guests came and stayed for weeks at a time. Two of the most popular of these resorts were the Robert H. Weaver home and the Rufus Weaver home on the Reems Creek Road.

In the 1930's the shadows of coming events began to cast their gray cloud over the economic situation in the nation and its churches. The invisible hand of the tightening up of finances was felt more keenly each year.

The District arranged a Standard Training School at Weaver College in 1930. A church sexton is mentioned for the first time, with a salary of $36 per quarter. Fuel was $42.56 and lights and phone $13.95 for the same period.

Two interesting sidelights on customs of the day are shown in responses to "Have the General Rules been read?" One was, "Yes, and commented on." The other required the pastor to preach a sermon on Christian Education and one on the Call to Preach once each quarter.

The Sunday School dropped to a rating of C-type on the Standard of Efficiency, but Mrs. J. V. Erskine put new life into the Epworth Leagues by her gracious enthusiasm and dedicated leadership. The Women's Missionary Society helped organize a Union group of the women's missionary societies of the other churches in town, Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist Protestant. Beginning in October 1930 a meeting of this Union group was held quarterly, each church taking its turn in being hostess. This organization was still in operation 48 years later, calling itself Church Women of Weaverville. Its offerings were used to send Christmas checks to each young person from Weaverville then serving as a missionary in foreign fields.

In this era repairs on the church were done by the Stewards, work such as broken windows, leaks in the roof, electric light repairs, etc. When a new roof had to be put on the parsonage, the church paid for the shingles and the labor was done by members of the Board or of the church. The Ladies Aid Society was asked by the Board to pay the church's paving assessment of $59. The ladies of the church were asked to help pay an insurance debt of $120. They gave only $60, so each Board member gave $5 to pay the balance.

The debt on the church furnace was a heavy burden. Again the ladies were asked to lend a helping hand, but their reply was that they would contribute on the principle of the debt, but "not one dollar for interest."

As 1931 neared the economic situation of the nation had its imprint on the church, through bank failures, for it was noted, "We have $85.65 tied up in the bank." Their total budget of $4,588 was $1,200 less than the previous year. They could not pay the pastor his full salary by the end of the year. The Rev. Ratledge attempted to remedy the situation by permitting the unpaid balance of his salary to be applied to Conference Claims. This was evidently about $600.

The church began a new system of having committees for designated areas of work. These areas were Finance, Property, Publicity and Hospitals, Religious Education and Recreation, Spiritual Work and Pulpit Supply. A new Men's Club was formed and men from the other churches were invited to join. This club remained active for many years, having supper meetings at each of the churches, mainly the Presbyterian and Methodist. One of its best presidents was John V. Erskine, a devout Catholic and long time mayor of Weaverville.

An every member canvass was held. Twenty-eight members of the church agreed to pay $50 per year and three agreed to pay $100 per year, but only 52 2/3 percent of the budget was pledged. The church membership was divided among the Stewards and each Steward was asked to visit his people personally and report to the Board each one's response.

Weaver College changed its policy by having its students and faculty attend Sunday School at the church. They had previously attended the 11 a. m. worship service on Sunday, but very few college students moved their membership to Weaverville. Some of the faculty did unite with this church.

In 1932 there came a time for the Directors of the closed bank to negotiate with the Board of Stewards about the $2,900 note, the debt for the church furnace. Many church members had frozen funds in the closed bank, and they asked that their accounts be used to offset the church debt. Serious deliberations followed. The Bank officials agreed to take the frozen deposits to apply on the furnace note if the note could be paid in its entirety. . . The matter ended in 1936 with the church getting the note for $600, according to C. Fred Brown, a member of the Board of Stewards at the time.

The church budget was $1,596 in arrears. The Rev. Ratledge was questioned about the advisability of donating his unpaid salary, as to whether it might be better to reduce the whole church budget outright. This was settled by having the W. N. C. Conference reduce the pastor's salary from $2,100 to $1,500, thereby reducing all other Conference items in the budget. One month before Conference the total budget was $1,812 in arrears.

When the Rev. Bryan Crosby came to the church in 1933 the financial affairs of the church were at the lowest ebb in all of its years. W. M. Reagan succeeded Leon Garrison as Chairman of the Board. Each Steward was given a list of members to visit and report verbally to the Board the results of each visit. Lists were exchanged, methods of encouraging collections were tried, the Board members combed through their lists, name by name. . .Times were really hard. The Stewards dug deep in their own pockets and got the deficit down to $783.

The following year there was a similar pattern of hard times. An effort was made to put the church records in order so that they might have a correct roll in membership. Two bits of personal news crept into the record. Mrs. Belle Reagan, organist, was paid a salary of $25 per quarter. A little two-manual Estey organ had

been installed in the church for worship services, according to Mrs. Reagan, but there is no record as to when it had been purchased. Miss Nellie Mae Roberts was communion steward for many years and Mrs. Ed Reeves provided home-canned grape juice for the communion service for a long while.

Two bright spots appeared on the horizon. The Board of Stewards, through VERY hard work, managed to "pay out" for the first time in three years. The Board formed a Dollar-a-Week Club among the church members, which helped the budget a great deal. This was the year that Mr. and Mrs. George Ward gave funds for a new cement walk leading from the street to the front of the church.

In 1934 the Rev. Frank Smathers arrived as pastor of the church and remained for four years, which proved to be one of the most successful quadrenniums in the history of the church. He began by stressing church attendance at the Sunday services and the importance of balancing the budget quarterly. There were 316 members on the church roll.

The Board set up new committees: Evangelism, Fellowship and Recreation, Lay Speaking and Publicity, and Social Welfare. The Rev. Smathers organized the first Vacation Church School. Many special events were planned, including an Easter Egg Hunt for the children, an Old Folks Day, a big Sunday School picnic, many activities for the Boy Scouts, renewed interest in the Wesley Brotherhood, and vesper services instead of evening services on Sunday. A lovely reception was given for the faculty of Weaver College, which was being merged with Brevard Institute and Rutherford College to form Brevard College.

The minister gathered groups to help improve the church property. They worked together to level the land on the church lot on the north side of the church. They placed sod on the lawn at the curb of the street, improved the strip of land at the back of the church, painted the columns at the front of the church and did many other things.

By the end of the second quarter the church budget was 49 percent paid, and at the end of the year the treasurer had a surplus of $75 on hand! The church voted to give the pastor a new suit of clothes and raised his salary to $1,600!

A School of Worship was held in the church by Dr. Carl King, Executive Secretary of the Conference Board of Education. The custom of raising the Conference Benevolences in an Easter offering was begun, and continued for many years thereafter.

By 1936 a strong Men's Class had developed in the Sunday School with Judge William A. Hart as teacher. A cabin was built north of the church on the site where the present educational building now stands. The Men's Bible Class met there. The Rev. Homer Casto was assistant teacher.

A Boys Club was organized. The Young People won the efficiency cup at a District meeting. The Sunday School attendance doubled, with 85 percent of the enrollment attending. E. S. Reeves completed 15 years as Sunday School Superintendent and became Superintendent of the Adult Department for several years.

The Men's Club had dinner meetings at the church on a fairly regular schedule, but by this time the club's membership had gradually changed to Methodist men only. The circles took turns in serving the meal and the revenue went to local mission projects in the women's organization.

The Rev. Homer Casto was a faithful member and powerful influence in this church for many years, serving as teacher of the Men's Class, Bible Study leader and teacher of a Young Men's Class. He was a retired Methodist Protestant minister, who established Bethel Home, a sanitarium for tubercular patients. He was a poet who

wrote of local people and places in his poems. He published a number of volumes of verse. He was well loved by all whose path crossed his. He loved the mountains so much that he had the huge gray stone boulder placed as a marker in the church yard. A sentence written years later about the gray rock described the man himself. It said, "He saw in it (the rock) strength, solidarity and durability -all qualities for good Christian people."

Plans for a unified budget were discussed for the first time and the matter was referred to the church's Board of Education. All Sunday School finances were kept in a separate account, the first three Sunday offerings used for school expenses, the fourth Sunday going to missions and all fifth Sunday offerings being sent to the Children's Home.

At Christmastime the church joined with the other two churches in town in providing baskets of food for needy families. All the baskets were prepared in the basement of the Presbyterian Church, then delivered to the recipients by the Volunteer Fire Department.

The church observed all special days set by General Conference. So well were things going that the Church raised the salary of the pastor to $1,800. In 1937 the Rev. Smathers taught a course of study, "The Steward of the Methodist Church," for all Board members. Pre-Easter services were planned by the four churches, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian and Methodist Protestant.

In April the congregation gave $1,000 in cash and pledges toward the purchase of a Wurlitzer organ. This organ had been in the Imperial Theater in Asheville for years, but when sound movies came into use the theater manager offered the organ for sale at a very small price.

Plans were made for its installation at a cost of $100. C. W. Medler was employed to design and make a wooden grille to go in front of the pipes. He was paid $75 for the grille, which was a beautiful intricate work of art. Forty years later the grille was placed in the balcony in front of the antiphonal parts of a second pipe organ.

The moving spirit behind the pipe organ project was Mrs. Belle Reagan, organist and choir director for 40 years. The theater organ had many fancy stops on it. Dr. Baldwin from Asheville Teachers College came out and gave an organ concert, using most of these stops in his selections. The congregation was greatly pleased. The pastor wrote, "The newly installed organ is adding to the attractiveness of our services and we feel that it will prove a helpful servant in the years ahead." A lovely Christmas Cantata was presented by the choir under Mrs. Reagan's direction.

Four large windows on either side of the church were of amber glass, which caused a glare on sunny mornings in the sanctuary. The Board discussed painting the glass light blue to harmonize with the stained glass windows in the center of either side. This did not materialize, for later it seemed wiser to spend more money and have less expensive stained glass put in these four windows.

Special loyalty weeks were set from July until September, culminating in a big Home Coming Day. The Rev. A. W. Plyler came back to preach in the afternoon on the old Camp Ground. Letters from all of the other ministers who had served the church were read. It was a happy day for all who were there.

The Board in 1938 wrote Carl Bamford, manager of the Imperial Theater, thanking him for his patience about the church's overdue payments on the organ.

A new Young Men's Class was organized with the Rev. Homer Casto as teacher.

They bought a piano for the cabin. The Methodist Protestants joined in a Vacation Church School, which had an enrollment of 96. A second Boy Scout troop was organized. New equipment for the church kitchen was purchased.

When the Rev. Harold Groce came to the church as pastor in November 1938, he wrote at the first Quarterly Conference, "The pastor was delighted to find a well organized and progressive church manned by a most capable leadership in every department of the church." W. M. Reagan was church Lay Leader. An every member canvass was made and the church budget balanced quarterly.

Unification of the three branches of Methodism had been under consideration for months. After a huge uniting Conference in Kansas City, Missouri in 1939, the plan of unification for churches in local communities was available to the two Methodist denominations in Weaverville, the Methodist Protestant and the Methodist Episcopal, South. The Rev. Groce called a joint meeting of the Boards of Stewards and the Trustees of the two churches. There were legal matters of church property and deeds to discuss. E. L. Loftin, attorney, handled these things for the group.

The General Church planned a new organization with new names for its areas of work. The Board of Stewards became the Official Board. The Woman's Missionary Society became the Woman's Society of Christian Service. A unified budget was put into operation. The Conference Benevolences became the World Service Askings, apportioned to all local churches by a Conference Committee. All members were encouraged to use envelopes for their offerings. An effort was made to conform to all of the new regulations. The name of the new church was simply The Methodist Church.

A called meeting of the congregation of the Methodist Protestant Church was held on September 10, 1939. The following resolution was adopted, "Be it resolved that at the end of the 1938-39 Conference year of the North Carolina Annual Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church that the Trustees of the Weaverville M. P. Church be and hereby are authorized to convey to the Trustees of the Methodist Church of Weaverville the property of said M. P. Church which have not already been disposed of by a former meeting of the church."

This was signed by the Rev. W. C. Clark, pastor, Mrs. Guy Edwards, Secretary, and Mrs. N. T. Holcombe, Trustee. The names of 29 persons are listed as having been received into membership in the new church, including our beloved Irene Holcombe Clark, who was later our choir director and organist for years. Other M. P. families coming into membership included the Edwards, Garrisons, Holcombes, McPeters, McSwains, Hamptons, Buckners, Penleys, Landons and Gills.

The union of the two groups worked out very beautifully. It is well that the people united right at the time, for in some areas congregations waited and remained separate, calling themselves by other names, such as Wesleyan Methodists. Years passed and they are still separate denominations.

The Rev. Groce wrote, "Since this is the first report of the pastor given in a Quarterly Conference under the new Methodist Church, let it be said that he and this church rejoice with the Church at large in the triumphal success of the uniting Conference recently held at Kansas City, Missouri in again making possible the assertion of John Wesley, 'The Methodist Church are one people and we pray for God's blessing on the Church and His future.'"

Resolutions relating to the transfer of property were passed October 9,1939. This was the year the women had the 60th Anniversary Celebration of their organization described elsewhere in this history.

A rock walkway was built from the cabin to the church, but as winter approached the problem of trying to heat the cabin became acute. . .it ended in the

Young Men's Class moving back into the Church. Another problem raised its ugly head. After a robbery of church equipment, it was necessary to keep the church locked when it was not in use.

This church participated in a nationwide Youth Crusade for Christ.

At a District meeting held at Central Church only 31 Lay Leaders were reported in the entire Asheville district. The chief job of Lay people at this time was to try to keep the church budget in balance and to do odd jobs around the church and parsonage. With the uniting of the three churches the M. P. group brought a new emphasis on Lay Work into the whole denomination. Their church had featured the "priesthood of the Laity" in such a way that the leaven worked on the other two branches of Methodism in the new union.

The Rev. Groce was transferred to another church in mid-year and the Rev. Fred O. Dryman became pastor, remaining on the charge for five years, 1940-1945. His first Sunday in the pulpit was his birthday and as the months passed he became one of the most beloved pastors to ever serve the church. His wife was so well loved that when a newly formed circle of the W. S. C. S. was organized for young working women, it was named the Matilda Dryman Circle, still a very active group four decades later. The Drymans made 263 personal visits to their parishioners in their first quarter in Weaverville.

He worked very carefully to merge the two congregations into a real awareness of unity. He put into operation all of the changes in organizational structure recommended by General Conference.

Mrs. John V. Erskine was of invaluable assistance. She had been secretary of the Board of Stewards in 1929 and had continued through the intervening years, consistenly loyal to her job. She had also been a teacher in the Church School, president of the Woman's Missionary Society, leader for the Epworth Leagues, now called Methodist Youth Fellowship. Her loyalty, enthusiasm and generosity were an inspiration to all whose lives touched hers, especially during the days when the church budget had such "slim pickin's."

The Rev. Dryman laid the foundation according to the suggested plan. Members of the Official Board were elected for 3-year terms, staggered so that one third would rotate off each year. A Committee on Nominations presented its nominees to the Quarterly Conference. The minimum salary for the pastor was set at $1,800, but the Board voted to pay its pastor $1,900. Committees named to carry out church work were ushers, finance, music, revival and budget. A new Pastor-Parish Relations Committee was set up as a clearing house for mutual good will. A formal Charter Meeting for the W. S. C. S. was held with 87 women signing the charter membership roll.

Special events included a bridal shower given by the church women for Irene Clark, who was married to the Rev. W. C. Clark, former M. P. Pastor now a member of the Western North Carolina Conference. The women also provided an all day retreat for the high school students at the home of Mrs. Lucy Weaver Posey on the Reems Creek Road.

The biggest event of the year of 1941 was a District Evangelistic Meeting at the Asheville City Auditorium, when Dr. John R. Mott addressed hundreds of Methodists. Dr. Mott was known the world over for his excellent messages and for his many religious books.

One Sunday morning the church members gave $118 for War Relief Funds. A leaflet, "The Methodist Layman," was given to every church member to study. In many ways this helped widen the scope of laymen's work in the church. All officials of

the church were carefully listed in the Quarterly Conference record book for the first time.

The three Weaverville churches planned to have union Sunday evening services in the month of May. A new project was presented to these churches, to have someone to teach the Bible in the public schools. The three churches were asked to contribute $50 per month to help pay the salary of a teacher. The Methodist budget was at a very low level -in September the church was behind $678 in the pastor's salary, but the Methodists decided to do their part in the Bible-in-the-Schools project.

Many special offerings were taken that year -for British Methodism, for Christian Work in Camps for Servicemen, to endow a Chair of Religion at Scarritt College in Nashville, Tennessee. . . .and the church paid its annual assessment in full!

The Board appointed a committee of three, Rev. Homer Casto, Mrs. N. T. Holcombe and Mrs. Guy Edwards, to sell the former M. P. Church to the Union Church Group on the Reems Creek Road, the sale to be through the Board of Trustees. This committee recommended in April that "the property of the former Methodist Protestant Church (with the exception of the bell) be given to the Pleasant Grove Community to be moved to said community and used as church property." This was done.

It was a custom of the Trustees to make a report of the value of church property at each Quarterly Conference. To show how property values change, in 1941 the Trustees set a value of $40,000 on the church, $5,000 on the parsonage, and $1,000 on the former M. P. Church house, making a total of $46,000. Twenty years earlier they had valued the church at $28,500 and the parsonage at $6,000.

The effects of World War II were strongly felt in the congregation in these years. In 1942 there were 19 young men from the church in military service. The circles of the W. S. C. S. divided the names of the servicemen so that each soldier might receive something from home, a letter or a package, at least once a month. A big oval framed plaque containing the names of all the Methodist servicemen was put in a prominent place in the church. There were two casualities among our young Methodist men, Woodell Weaver and Franklin Sorrells.

At an Annual District Meeting in Brevard all of the churches were urged to keep in close touch with their servicemen.

Bishop Clare Purcell preached at this church in June 1942.

In September 1942 the Board adopted a resolution authorizing the Trustees to sell the lot upon which the old M. P. Church had stood.

New stained glass was placed in the four big windows in the sanctuary that year -the windows that had formerly had amber glass. Each window had three sections. Church families placed memorials in these sections as follows: on the righ facing the altar, Charles C. and Sarah Davis Brown, and M. A. Yost; on the left, Rev. J. A. Reagan and Mary Ann Reagan, Rev. Robert Wesley Pickens and Tolitha Pickens, Daniel and Eliza J. Reagan, William Humphrey Reeves and Laura Wells Reeves. The other six sections have Bible verses on the memorial plaques. The total cost of these windows was about $700. They harmonize beautifully with the other two stained glass memorial windows in the center of each side.

The women of the church later had stained glass put in the three double doors in the vestibule of the church.

As the year of 1942 drew to a close the problem of transportation became acute, because of a gas rationing program to conserve gas for the war effort. In

1943 the war became the main topic of conversation. Most of the church families had service flags in their windows, blue stars for men in the service and gold stars for those killed in action. The women of the church knitted garments and worked in the community sewing room making plain garments for hospitals, the Red Cross and Bundles for Britain, an organization to help the British who were undergoing terrific air raids.

Cards with a serviceman's name and address were printed and distributed each Sunday to members to write to them. Miss Mary Jane Weaver gave a big service flag to the church. A roster of all of the servicemen from Weaverville was printed so that the community might know who to pray for. America was at war and the horrors of that war reached into the peaceful little mountain village. . . and its church people prayed and prayed. The Red Cross sent a special commendation to the women of the church for having completed 158 garments that year.

Copies of a new ritual for the church were pasted in the back of the hymnals used each Sabbath.

The traditional Union Thanksgiving service was held at 10 a.m. on Thursday at this church and each congregation gave its offering to the Children's Home of its denomination. It was at one of these union services that a messenger arrived notifying the people of the death of two servicemen, Hubert Garrison and James Roberts, lifelong companions. The congregation stood in shocked grief, then softly sang, "O, God, Our Help In Ages Past, Our Hope for Years to Come," as tears flowed down the cheeks of every person present. The cost of war had come home to the people of Weaverville. Later news came that Franklin Sorrells of this church had been killed in action. The Sorrells family later gave two brass offering plates in memory of their son.

The year of 1944 was a continuation of the previous year. The women kept busy at their work of sewing and knitting. The Rev. Dryman wrote, "Our young people are doing a good job under difficulties known and experienced -and therefore appreciated by all of our churches." The young people joined in sending remembrances to men in service.

The women gave a helping hand to the Negro Methodist Church. They gave them dishes for their kitchen and financial help in having the interior of their church repainted. They saved Octagon soap coupons by the hundreds to send to Bethlehem Center in Charlotte to help them have their Chapel redecorated. With the help of all of the women of the W. N. C. Conference this project provided a beautiful little Chapel at this Center.

Small wooden racks were placed on the back of the pews to hold offering envelopes and pencils. The choir started a fund to buy new choir robes -they had been wearing short white surplices with full black skirts made by the women of the church.

The polio epidemic struck many young people of the area and the church gave a special offering to help polio victims. The furnace in the church gave a great deal of trouble and a new furnace was discussed. The parsonage needed a thousand dollars in repairs. It was suggested that the old M. P. bell from their church should be placed in this church. The bell was located and brought here. A loud speaker system for the sanctuary was discussed. $1,100 was raised for church improvements.

A churchwide Crusade for Christ was launched as a quadrennial emphasis when Methodists of the World would attempt to raise 25 million dollars for Methodist Relief and Rehabilitation work.

The choir must have gotten their new robes by 1945, for there is a record of Doug Roberts building a cabinet in which the robes might be placed. Mr. Roberts did many of the needed repairs on the church for a long time as his gift to the church. He was an excellent carpenter and builder.

The plan of the three churches to finance a Bible teacher in the public schools was abandoned in 1945, for lack of finances. The Rev. Dryman, and the Baptist and Presbyterian ministers took turns in teaching Bible in the school for one hour each week. The women made service flags for the two Negro churches. They gathered the old hymnals of the church and took them to the Cherokee Indian Church. The W. S. C. S. and the Ladies Aid took turns in serving supper to the Men's Brotherhood. Mission Study classes became prime events for the W. S. C. S. They conscientiously followed instructions for four such studies each year.

By the end of 1945 the pastor's salary had been increased to $2,100 per year and the budget had reached $5,074.55.

This was the year that E. S. Reeves concluded his service as Church School Superintendent, having completed 26 years in this office. Few men have had that many years in seeing a whole generation grow up in the Church School, and in witnessing a growth from a one-room school in which all classes met to a departmentalized school with separate worship service and class sessions for each age group. He was honored by the entire church for his faithful service.

Dr. Paul S. Kennett came to the church in 1946 as pastor. A new plan was inaugurated by the Southeastern Jurisdiction. All of the Methodists were asked to put the names of their servicemen in a Book of Remembrance to be placed in a room adjacent to the Memorial Chapel at Lake Junaluska. Each family would pay $1 per name and the funds would be used to build a Chapel and a Remembrance Room. About $100,000 was realized in the project. The Book of Remembrance has been seen by thousands of people who visit the Lake each summer. The names are listed alphabetically in the cities of the states in the S. E. Jurisdiction.

The Methodist College Advance Campaign was launched throughout the church. This church was asked to give $2,800 over a period of three years. $1,054 was given the first year.

So many repairs needed to be made on the church that the Board appointed Grover C. Brown to be in charge of getting them done. The problem of water coming into the basement across the cement floor each time there was a heavy rain proved very troublesome. Various methods were tried to remedy the situation. Gutters on the church were worn out. The kitchen needed much repair. Slowly and surely Mr. Brown got things back in good condition again. The Masonic Lodge was granted permission to use the fellowship hall and the Church School rooms for some of their events, free of charge.

By 1947 the church membership was 367. The pastor's salary was $2,400 and the total budget $7,054. The Buncombe County Health Department placed restrictions on gatherings of all kinds, including church meetings, because of a polio epidemic in the area. The Methodist Youth Fellowship must have had some kind of meeting during the year, for it is recorded that the women served snack supper to them. Lawrence Weaver was chosen as Lay Leader and Judge William Hart became Superintendent of the Adult Department of the Church School.

The records of these years were sketchy. There was evidently much routine business, but it was not described in the minutes of the Official Board or in the Pastor's report to the Annual Conference.

General Conference meeting in Boston in 1948 made an ardent plea for Methodists to give one-third more for missions during the coming quadrennium. The

District Superintendent asked this church to increase its giving to missions $50. There were 399 members this year (recorded as 299 active and 94 inactive). They paid the Conference $6,554 and the pastor's salary was $2,600, making the total budget $7,846.

Dr. Kennett's wife had a serious heart attack in 1949. The church thought that it would be better for her not to move to another parsonage until she was stronger. They made improvements at the parsonage, built a bathroom adjacent to the study downstairs, so that she could remain downstairs when she came home from the hospital. All of the people tried to make it as easy as possible for her. Both of the Kennetts were such lovely people that it was a privilege and a joy to have them with us for five years.

Clyde E. Hornaday made a memorial gift to the church in memory of his wife, the former Mrs. Charles R. Moore. What the gift was is not recorded, but the resolution of thanks to Mr. Hornaday mentions, "the unselfish, munificent and timely gifts" made by Mrs. Hornaday during her lifetime.

A new Bible Class was organized in the Church School -a young couples class of 17 members. For many years they called themselves the Young Adults, until someone referred to them as "the gray-haired young adults," then they changed their name to the Wesley Fellowship. Mrs. John Wright has been the teacher of this group from 1949 to the present date.

Ernest M. Reagan completed his tenure as Church School Superintendent after four years of perfect attendance. He was tenor soloist in the choir and had sung more solos at worship services in the church than any other person.

In 1950 there were 410 members on the roll. The pastor had just had a $200 raise and the budget had reached $7,733.

The church again participated in the Christmas Cheer project, along with the other two churches, plus a newly organized Lions Club and the American Legion. All groups contributed food and the Legion bought more food. They prepared the baskets and took them to designated needy families. This was a community-wide Christmas project, which was later changed to give Christmas checks to the families and let them choose their own food at designated stores. The custom was still in operation 27 years later, each church contributing $200 in cash, plus a gift from the Lions Club and the Masonic Lodge.

A young minister by the name of the Rev. L. Alexander Harper came on his first assignment to a church in 1951. Ralph Freeman replaced J. Robert Reagan as church treasurer. The church decided to set some long range goals, including renovation of the cabin, equipping the church kitchen, placing new lights in the fellowship hall, and the erection of a church steeple in which the old M. P. bell could be hung.

Mission specials were stressed by the church at large this year. The plan was that one might give $25 or more to a mission cause listed in a brochure from General Conference. This church gave $414 the first year. The improvements on the church increased the budget to $8,591 and the pastor's salary was set at $3,000.

No records were available for 1952, but the Rev. Harper remained for his second year. He was an excellent violinist. He felt the call to enter the Chaplaincy of the U. S. Navy, after which he became a minister in a Congregational Church.

The Rev. John Lowder arrived in Weaverville in 1953 and stayed for four busy years. He was an experienced builder and created a desire among the

congregation to improve the church and parsonage as much as possible. During his first year he supervised having the sanctuary repainted and the woodwork refinished. Then the church was to see a nice colonial parsonage created from an old two story house. Its kitchen was especially lovely, and convenient with all kinds of cabinets. Later came the building of a new educational building north of the church, to be described later in this history.

The Administrative Board put into practice the unified budget with every department of the church included in the system. The Board still operated on the rotation system in terms for Board members, thereby giving more members an opportunity to serve.

The church kitchen was modernized and equipped with complete cooking utensils and serving dishes. The pastor had his office at the church. A phone was put in the church on a party line with the Baptist Church. The Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches worked together to make a complete religious census of the town and outlying area, all workers making the census on the same Sunday afternoon.

The Men's Club, for some reason, had not met for many months. The Rev. Lowder called the men together and they raised $25 to pay to have the club re-chartered by the Conference. They called themselves the Men's Brotherhood. They met regularly, but the men cannot remember exactly when they changed their meetings to Sunday morning breakfasts.

The Western North Carolina Conference and the Virginia Conference planned an Evangelistic Crusade, exchanging ministers with each other. A minister from Virginia and his wife came to Weaverville for a week's series of meetings.

The Matilda Dryman Circle urged the Board to build a belfry in which the old M. P. bell might be placed. Mechanical chimes were suggested also. George Ward drew the plans for the belfry and the work progressed very well. A loud speaker was installed in the belfry, and the record playing equipment was put in the church office. The chimes were set to play at 6 p.m. and at noon each day. It was very beautiful to hear the sound of loved old hymns played by the chimes. They also tolled the hour of worship on Sunday at 11 a.m. and were set to play at the hour of a wedding.

All went well until early one morning about 3 o'clock, when the preacher was out of town, everybody for miles around was awakened by the chimes ringing out in the loudest volume possible! It was terrible! The blare kept right on until L. A. Weaver got out of bed and went to the church to cut the sound off. It was evidently a prank, when someone had set the chimes to play at the loudest volume in the dead of the night! It is needless to say that the record player cabinet in the office was carefully locked thereafter!

It was a great day when they planned to install the big old bell. There was great anticipation as a big tractor pulled up with a crane to lift the bell to its lofty dwelling place. The crane carefully swung it in place, and the workmen fastened it on the shaft. When it was swinging free, the Rev. Lowder pulled the rope to make it ring . . . and there was only a dead dull thud! Workmen then discovered a hairline crack all the way through the metal down the entire length of the bell . . . and it could not be repaired. Such a disappointment to everyone! Especially the former Methodist Protestants! Workmen left the old bell in the belfry to abide in lonely silence year after year.

The next year was even busier than the one before, for the Rev. Lowder and the church members planned to remodel the parsonage completely, inside and outside. Plans were drawn to make it a semi-colonial home. The old front porch was torn off and a portico with four columns was built. Changes were made upstairs to have a large master bedroom with walk-in closets. The kitchen was modernized with nice

cabinets of every size. R. C. Brackett was the contractor in charge of the project which cost $6,500.

When the work was finished the Ladies Aid Society helped buy new furnishings. In July the Lowders had open house so that everyone might see the improvements that had been made. The transformation was amazingly attractive.

In 1954 a new church was organized in Beverly Hills, to be named the Groce Methodist Church, in honor of the Rev. T. A. Groce, father of Rev. Harold Groce, former pastor of this church. The new church was sponsored by the Buncombe County Council of Methodist Churches and this church made a substantial donation to its building fund.

Ernest M. Reagan, Jr. was graduated from Duke Divinity School in 1954, the first young person from this church to enter the ministry in many years. The Board voted to send him luggage and a gift of $50 as a graduation gift.

In later years W. A. Rich became a Lay preacher in this district and William C. Clark was first a Lay preacher, then completed the educational requirements to become a full fledged minister in the W. N. C. Conference.

Some repair work was done on the stained glass windows of the church. The workmen estimated the value of the Moore window at $4,500 and all of the windows in the church at $10,000. The tall chimneys of the church had to be repaired at a cost of $375.

There was a revision of the membership roll and 49 names were removed, in accordance with the rules of the Discipline.

The Board employed a part-time secretary for the pastor. Miss Cornelia Waddell was chosen as our first secretary at a salary of $6 per week. In order to promote the North Carolina Christian Advocate among our people, the Board subscribed for every family in the church. They were very dismayed later to find that so many people threw the Advocate in the trash basket at the post office, just as they did other bulk mail, that the plan was abandoned the following year.

The Men's Bible Class voted to pay for the front yard of the parsonage to be landscaped. They raised about $900 for the project and the plantings were lovely. Mrs. Troy West gave the funds to landscape the front yard of the church. This, too, was very beautiful and Methodists were very proud of both places.

When 1955 rolled around the members were planning to redecorate the sanctuary. Someone told them that the Negro Methodist Church had repaired and improved their church, but were greatly in debt. This church took up an offering of $300 to help the smaller church.

White stone and gravel was placed on the parking lot at the north side of the church. Some of the men made a cement walk from the back door of the parsonage to the garage. The Young Adult Class painted the fellowship hall and some of the class rooms and had great fun doing it. They also made improvements in the kitchen, with good advice from the Rev. Lowder. Carpet was placed within the chancel, around the altar and down the center aisle of the sanctuary at a cost of $967. A new stoker and hopper that would hold 100 pounds of coal was put in the furnace. A fireproof file for church records was purchased for the church office. An effort was made to find as many old records of the church as possible to place in the file.

It was deemed wise to draft a set of rules for anyone who played the organ, either for services or for regular practice. Mrs. Keith Dorman was organist and choir director at the time and two young ladies in the church were studying organ.

The Board initiated the custom of having the church send a spray of flowers to the family at the death of a member of the church. They set the amount to be spent at $7.50. The first spray went to the funeral service for Mrs. Lilla Brown and the next to Miss Fannie Hoofnagle.

Part III 1955-1976

Through the preceding two decades some fundamental sociological changes had taken place in the community and these were reflected in the church.

Weaver College had been removed from the town, creating a loss of the student body, who had attended Sunday services and had patronized local businesses, and the faculty, who had provided leadership, as well as cultural influence to the community and church.

An increase in the number of families owning automobiles had caused a gradual decrease in the number of guests at the old boarding houses near the town, for the car-owning guests stayed shorter times and travelled greater distances. Motels sprang up by the dozen as tourism was promoted by an active Asheville Chamber of Commerce.

More industries had located in Western Carolina and more local people were employed by Asheville businesses. Fewer big farms were under cultivation in the area. Weaverville was slowly becoming a satellite community of the City of Asheville.

The steady growth of the Baptist and Presbyterian denominations enabled them to overtake the Methodists in membership, but the strong leadership stemming from old pioneer families remainded in the Methodist Church.

A history of the Baptist Church written in 1972 stated, "The history of a church is written in the lives of its members."

By 1955 the need for new classrooms for the Sunday School became apparent to the workers in the school. Robert N. Reagan, Sunday School Superintendent mentioned the need to William Reeves. Others approved of the idea and speculated on the possibility of building a new educational annex on the lot north of the church.

The idea crystalized in the mind of William Reeves. So he brought a check for $10,000 from his aunt, Mrs. Gay Green, and gave the check to the Rev. John Lowder, pastor, as a nest egg to start a building fund. The matter was brought up at the meeting of the Official Board, who recommended that the proposition be brought before the congregation on the following Sunday.

This was done and the congregation agreed wholeheartedly. Plans were made to seek donations and pledges for the new building. As the year of 1956 rolled around the project seemed to be moving slowly, so Reeves brought a communication from Mrs. Green that if the congregation would raise $10,000 in cash, she would give $10,000 (which would make $30,000 on hand to start with) and that if the congregation would pledge $20,000, she would give another $10,000, thereby making available a second $30,000, or the whole $60,000 it was estimated the building would cost. The Duke Foundation gave $5,000, so the cost of the building and the interest on the loan while the $20,000 in pledges was coming in made the total receipts and cost reach $65,000. The second offer also carried the stipulation that the building would be named The Reeves Educational Building.

During this time a Steering Committee had been named, including Troy West, Chairman, Grover Brown, J. Robert Reagan, E. L. Loftin, Mrs. W. O. Barnard, Robert

N. Reagan, and Mrs. John Wright. On Sunday, May 13, 1956, the congregation adopted the recommendation of the Official Board to erect a new educational building.

In June three committees were named: Finance Committee, Troy W. West, Chairman; Building Committee, Grover C. Brown, Chairman, and Memorials, William Reeves, Chairman.

The church records have meager details of the construction work on the educational building. It was in October, 1956, that Mrs. Green made her gift of the second $10,000 and the church was to have its matching $10,000 by December 31, 1956. The congregation accepted the challenge in November and got busy on a big financial plan. The committees worked hard to get donations and pledges to match Mrs. Green's generous gifts.

Bronze plaques were planned, one for the entrance of the Educational Building in honor of the Reeves family and one on the wall of the Chapel in memory of Dr. and Mrs. C. P. West. A scroll was planned on which would be written the names of all persons to whom memorials were given for the building fund. Mrs. Alpine Weaver was chosen as secretary of this project.

William Reeves was named chairman of the Building Fund Committee. An application was made to the Duke Endowment for funds to complete the building. The architect's plans were approved in early May. The Trustees voted to raze the old cabin and sell it for what they could get. This was done and the land graded for the new structure.

Duke Endowment replied to the application for funds by saying that they would provide $5,000 to be paid $2,500 when the project was started and $2,500 when it was completed, and the building insured by January 30, 1960. In the spring of 1958 $2,500 was received from Duke Endowment.

The Church voted to borrow $3,000 from the Bank of French Broad. The Board had to get pledges to offset the loan at the Bank. The contractor was paid $16,500 in May, 1957. Plans were made to borrow the balance, probably $10,000, less the payment in July, which would be $7,000.

Another religious survey was made of the North Buncombe area by the three churches. An addressing machine was purchased for the church.

New furnishings, including a mahogany bedroom suite, were purchased for the parsonage. The Board made plans to begin a new system of greeters to welcome people to the 11 a. m. service on Sunday, the greeters to work in pairs, prefereably couples. Miss Cornelia Waddell was having a busy time doing the secretarial work, trying to keep up with all of the projects that were underway.

The Youth organization of the W. N. C. Conference planned a tour to United Nations and Washington, D. C. A few young people of this church went on the charter bus trip. The Rev. John Lowder was one of the adult counsellors on the tour.

In June 1957 the Rev. Lowder was transferred to another church and the Rev. Paschal Waugh came to this church as pastor. Church members gave the Waughs an oldfashioned "pounding" (gifts of food) at a surprise party at the parsonage.

In July the Church School moved into the Educational building for their first Sunday. All classrooms were beautifully furnished with tables and chairs, plus an organ in the Chapel and a piano in the Young People's Department. In addition to the money given for the building itself, Mrs. Green gave $3,000 toward the furniture. Her nephew, William Reeves, and her two sisters, Mrs. Lucy Anderson

and Mrs. Sadie Gibbs, gave the balance. The Methodist Youth Fellowship gave a bulletin board and directory for the new building.

An open house and tea honoring Mrs. Green was planned for Sunday afternoon, September 15, 1957 in the new Reeves Educational Building. The Woman's Society of Christian Service served refreshments.

The church owes a debt of gratitude to William Reeves, who was a key person in planning with his aunt, Mrs. Gay Green, in the gift of this building to the Weaverville Church. Mr. Reeves had been chairman of the Official Board for many years, had always felt a deep loyalty to his church and was most generous in his gifts through all of the years of his life.

L. A. Weaver was elected church treasurer in 1957 and served in this office until 1972.

At a Board meeting a plan was adopted about fuel oil for the parsonage's 1,000 gallon tank. The church would have the tank filled the first time. Each pastor would be asked to have it filled when he moved to a new assignment, so that the new pastor would have a full tank of fuel oil when he moved in.

In the severe winter cold of January bad luck decended on the church. The heat in the church went off and most of the plumbing in the church froze -thereby causing much extra expense.

A committee was chosen to select new church bulletins for the coming year. The records state, "The matter was tabled, as no ladies were present and it was felt that their advice would be most helpful." Later a bulletin with an etching of the church and the new educational building was selected for the front page of the bulletin and it has remained the same through 1978.

A wall in the basement of the church was removed to make the fellowship hall into one big room. Supporting steel posts were placed under the foundation where the old wall had been. Small chairs used in the old Nursery and Primary Departments were given to the Pleasant Grove Union Church.

Other improvements were made, including repainting the interior of the parsonage, a lighting system for the church steeple and front of the church. The Trustees reported that a new roof was needed on the church and the estimated cost was $1,650.

In November 1958 the Annual District Conference of the Asheville District was held at this church.

In 1959 the Lawrence A. Weavers, long time members of this church, celebrated their golden wedding anniversary.

Ralph Freeman, who had served as church treasurer many years, has been Chairman of the Church Ushers for a quarter of a century. His father, Rev. H. C. Freeman, a retired minister, was teacher of the Men's Bible Class for years. His son, Eddie Freeman, was a minister in the South Carolina Conference for five years.

Plans were made to provide a nursery for small children during the 11 a.m. Sunday worship service. Two women of the church would be asked to be in charge each Sunday.

There was a discussion of changing the pulpit area in order to make it easier for the pastor to serve communion, but nothing materialized.

In 1959 the pastor's salary was set at $4,600 per year, with a travel allowance of $550. All church organizations gave frequent donations to the Building Fund indebtedness, so that by December the debt had been reduced to $1,452. By January 1960 it had been paid in full and a Service of Dedication of the Reeves Educational Building was planned for January 31, 1960. The Rev. John Lowder, then pastor of the Biltmore Methodist Church, was invited to come back and take part in the celebration.

Some of the events of the spring included a family reunion of the Holcombe-Garrison-Carter families in the fellowship hall of the church; the Buncombe County Parent Teacher Association had its annual all day meeting in the church; and some of the small chairs from the old Nursery were given to the Mars Hill Methodist Church. Repairs on the organ amounted to $625 that year.

In 1961 the Conference sent the Rev. L. Baine Laye as pastor of this church and he remained for six years. New commissions were formed for different areas of work. These were Membership and Evangelism, Missions, Music and Worship, Education, Stewardship and Finance, and Christian Social Concerns.

There was a discussion of the need for additional land at the back of the church. The W. S. C. S. offered to undertake the paving of the parking lot in front of the educational building as their annual project.

Two Girl Scout troops met at the church regularly. The church sponsored the renewal of the charter for Boy Scout Troop #15. It was good to see that the church was making its facilities available to community organizations, training the young people in ideals of responsibility and good citizenship.

A new public address system was installed in the sanctuary in 1962. The Official Board was reorganized according to the new Discipline, to include designated church officers and 12 elected members. The new church bulletins had a church directory printed on the back page. A Junior Choir was organized, with Irene Clark and Jean Kennett as directors. A program on Evangelism was set for the year.

Inspectors from the North Carolina Department of Labor made an official inspection of the furnace boilers in the church and educational building. Everything that might be a fire hazard was ordered removed from the boiler rooms.

A training program was held for the ushers. The group elected their chief, Ralph Freeman, and divided into teams, with a schedule of teams to serve each month posted.

In October the parking lot was paved, the columns of the church repaired and painted and weather stripping was placed on the doors and windows of the parsonage.

The Union Thanksgiving service was held in this church in 1962. New navy blue choir robes were ordered to be paid for out of memorial funds contributed to the church. This was one of the one thousand Methodist churches observing Aldersgate Service on May 24. The Wesley Fellowship bought 100 metal folding chairs for use in the fellowship hall. A new Cub Scout Pack was organized with a Cub Master and Den Mothers in charge.

A new system was developed by the Conference in local churches paying their World Service funds. It was called "a package deal." Ours was 15 percent higher than it had been the previous year. The Administrative Board made plans to attend the Billy Graham Crusade in Asheville in 1964. Several of our people assisted the Crusade in making a religious survey of the county.

Goals for the year were adopted: 1. The Church budget approved and adopted according to the recommendations of the Annual Conference; 2. Concentrate on more effective work through better attendance, strengthen spiritual life and have more extensive program; 3. Cooperate with church Trustees on church building and renovation program.

A small children's table and chairs from the old Primary Department was given to the Weaverville Library to furnish a Children's Corner.

A special tea was planned in honor of Mrs. Belle Reagan, who was retiring after having served for 40 years as organist. The church presented a silver candelabra to her. Many friends came to the tea, which was beautifully planned by the women of the church.

Two music majors of Mars Hill College were employed as organist and choir director at $10 per Sunday. This lasted during the college year, but when school closed other arrangements had to be made.

A new brass communion set was purchased for the church. The Methodist Youth Fellowship gave $100 on the cost of the set. Later the Wesley Fellowship gave a matching lid in honor of their teacher, Mrs. John Wright.

The three Weaverville churches who had been having union Holy Week services in previous years, agreed that each church would plan its own observance in 1964. Again the pipe organ had to be overhauled at a cost of $675. The total church budget that year was $19,703.

In June 1965 Judge William Hart was the church's delegate to Annual Conference at Lake Junaluska. This was the year that the Church would vote on merging the Central Jurisdiction into other Jurisdictions, the Black churches to go into the Jurisdiction where they were located.

Another issue to be voted on was whether to include Mission Specials and payments on Higher Education in the "package deal" for local churches. Judge Hart discussed these issues before the Board, asking for a consensus of opinion as to how he should vote as the church's delegate. The report of the Conference apportionments was printed in the back of the treasurer's report.

The Men's Brotherhood had some lean years along about this time. Other interests absorbed them and they remained inactive until about 1967.

The remainder of the parking lot was paved in 1965. Robert Sinclair, a Mars Hill graduate, was organist for a while, when Mrs. Keith Dorman accepted the position for a few years. William Reeves and Glen West, Jr. gave 24 wooden folding chairs for the choir loft. They took up less room and were more comfortable for the choir.

In 1965 a Group Ministry was formed with all Methodist churches in the North Buncombe area as members. These were Weaverville, Mars Hill, Marshall, Hot Springs, Walnut, Clark's Chapel, Salem, Barnardsville, Pleasant Grove and Alexander Chapel. Miss Sarah McCain came to Weaverville to be the Church and Community Worker for the Group Ministry. Much good work was done in this ministry, for many more activities could be planned for the young people of the whole area and special sessions of the women's groups, with members from most of the churches attending. Miss McCain remained two years, with her office at the church.

New hymnals were needed for the church, so a "Christmas gift" project was adopted. Each family in the church was asked to buy a hymnal in honor or memory of someone, and give it to the church as a Christmas present. It took only a short

while to get money enough for 200 hymnals for the congregation and choir. Book plates were placed inside the front cover of each hymnal.

So much expensive work had been done on the old organ that Dr. J. C. Bradley came to the Board meeting, as spokesman for the choir, saying it would be more economical in the long run to buy a new Baldwin or Skinner electronic organ. He said that it would require $3,500 to put the old organ in good condition. Mrs. Gay Green offered to contribute $2,500 on a new organ, if the church decided to buy one.

She later contributed $3,000, the entire cost of the organ. William Reeves paid to have the choir loft remodeled and Maurice Head did the work. The Church paid for having the sound boxes installed on either side of the choir loft, plus some additional work on the back wall.

The new organ was purchased in February 1966. The console was placed on the left side facing the choir. An echo unit was placed in the balcony. It was a joyful Sunday when the congregation heard for the first time the tones of the lovely organ. Mrs. Dorman enjoyed it most of all.

Ed Hamilton, who had been the church janitor for many years, could no longer work. Most of the church members, as well as outside friends, contributed a nice sum of money to give him as a parting gift.

At a Board meeting a tribute was given to Troy W. West for his many years of faithful leadership in the church.

Plans were made in the community to have four teams of 14 and 15 year old boys enter the Babe Ruth League at a cost of $1,000. Every church and business in town contributed to the fund. The Methodist Church gave $50 and its members gave additional gifts.

The Administrative Board had the section of the Discipline giving the duties of each commission in the church reprinted into small booklets and gave each Commission Chairman one to use in organizing his group.

The Young People asked that the room in the educational building, originally planned as a crib nursery, be given to them for their use. They made a lounge where they might meet and have refreshments.

At this time every request for Church School equipment had to be made to the Administrative Board. The first record of presenting Bibles to those students who were being promoted to the Junior Department was in 1965 when 15 Bibles were given to boys and girls.

Somehow it was a bit of a problem for the church to make its payments on the installation fee for the new organ. The treasurer was allowed to borrow money from the Building Fund to make the payments. Mrs. Edwin West and the members of the Matilda Dryman Circle made the dorsal at the back of the choir loft. This circle also repainted the Nursery and provided new toys for the small children. Teen-age girls replaced a paid worker in the Nursery for Sunday morning worship service. The Matilda Dryman Circle agreed to be their helpers.

In December 1960 certain rooms in the educational building were designated as Fall Out Shelters by the Buncombe County Defense Agency. The legal aspects of the matter were studied by Judge William Hart, William Reeves, and E. L. Loftin, attorneys, and the license was signed by William Reeves, chairman of the Administrative Board, Rev. L. B. Laye, pastor, and Judge Hart, Lay Leader. The room was equipped with food, water and other survival supplies. The shelter was to be used only in an emergency of an actual attack. A copy of the license, plan of

the building, and three pages of information was filed in the minutes of the Board meeting. A red sign designating this as a Fall Out Shelter was attached to the outside of the building at the front door. . . and was still there in 1978, not ever having been used.

The new hymnals were dedicated in a beautiful Christmas service on Sunday morning. There were 248 hymnals, each with a book plate inscribed with the name of someone. The Rev. James B. McLarty, an expert in humnody and new pastor of the church, planned and conducted the service. He later taught a class in Methodist hymnody.

The W. S. C. S. made an urgent plea to the Board in 1967 to renovate the church kitchen. A committee was appointed to investigate the matter. New shelves were made for the Children's Division by Kiffin Garrison, the church providing the materials. The estimate for the cost of improving the kitchen was $1,332. The W. S. C. S. agreed to pay $300 on the project. The old gas stove was sold and a new electric range purchased. William Reeves donated a new white porcelain sink. Other improvements were made at a overall cost of $1,500. . . .and it was such a nice kitchen to work in!

Memorial gifts were made to the church in memory of Mrs. Alice Palmer Reagan. New recessed lights were put in the choir loft as a gift of Glen West, Sr. and his two sons, Glen, Jr. and Buster West.

It was in June 1967 that the Methodist Church merged with the Evangelical United Brethren Church. The vote was taken at General Conference. The official name of this church became the Weaverville United Methodist Church and the women's group became the Women's Society of Christian Service. The Central Jurisdiction, formerly made up of Black churches was absorbed into the established Jurisdictions of the church.

The Boy Scouts were VERY active at this time. Three Scouts earned their God and Country Award and the Board paid for their medals. Twelve Scouts earned the Eagle Scout Award in six years.

The church enjoyed the musical knowledge and ability of the Rev. McLarty. He sang beautifully and often concluded his sermon by singing one of his favorite hymns. His class in hymnody helped the members appreciate and enjoy the new hymnal more.

The Union Thanksgiving services of the Weaverville churches are always beautiful and the church was always FULL of worshippers. They followed the same plan through the years -each church taking its turn in being host, the minister of another church preaching the sermon and the third minister having the prayer and benediction.

The Union Meeting of Church Women of Weaverville is a lovely time of fellowship. They meet every four months, each church being hostess once a year. A program on some type of mission is presented and a social hour held. At the end of the year all of the funds in the treasury are equally divided among six missionaries from Weaverville in foreign fields. In 1978 these were Catherine Peeke in Peru, Elizabeth Peeke in Haiti, Elisabeth Smith in the Indian Reservation in Arizona, the John Brawands in Mexico with the Wycliffe Bible Translators, the James Olin Colemans in Brazil and the Al Harrells in South Africa.

The Rev. McLarty moved the pastor's study from the small office to a larger room formerly occupied by the Men's Bible Class. He needed more space for his books. It was a fortunate move for the pastors in all the years since have had their study in this room.

By 1968 there were 32 Boy Scouts in Troop #15. Conley Hyer, Scoutmaster for may years, was presented a Key Award at the Scout Recognition Service of the Daniel Boone Council. The Board was so proud of him that they presented him with a new hat.

The Chapel of the Reeves Educational Building was repainted and Venetian blinds were given by the Matilda Dryman Circle. Miss Susan Carmichael of the Conference Children's Staff, came to the church to conduct a workshop for Children's Workers.

This was the year that our beloved Edith Erskine moved to Florida to join her daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Sawyer. Her long years of service as secretary of the Board, her many years as teacher of Mission Study and Bible Study groups, plus her dedication in serving in many other offices in Women's work, had endeared her to her fellow workers. The women gave her a lovely afghan as a parting gift and a Music Fund was established in her honor. She lived in Merritt Island, Florida for the remainder of her life. Her final journey home was made to be buried in West Memorial Park by the side of her husband.

The Rev. Bryce Parker came to the church in June 1969 and was one of the most beloved pastors to ever serve the church. He brought fresh ideas, a dedicated spirit and the enthusiasm of his young years to his work in Weaverville. On each Sunday morning he began his sermon by pausing a few seconds, then saying devoutly, "God is here!" One of his first projects was to have training sessions for the members of the Administrative Board and the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee. Under his leadership the United Methodist Men became a live wire group of people.

Activities for the Young People increased. The Girl Scouts had regular meetings. A Library Fund was started by placing $100 in the annual church budget. There was a discussion of having a church newsletter. For some time memorials had been given to the church, instead of sending flowers at the time of the death of a member. The Board decided to use this fund to buy volumes of the Interpreters Bible. Over a period of months all 18 volumes of this set were placed in the Church Library.

The year of 1968 brought much trouble with the furnace in the educational building. So many rooms were cold, and the furnace had to be worked on again and again. Office space was provided for Mrs. Peg Neal, Church and Community Worker for the North Buncombe Group Ministry. The room formerly planned as a crib nursery was given to Mrs. Neal as her office. She was most helpful in planning creative activities for the Youth and in conducting Study classes for the women of all of the churches in her Ministry. She also fitted a travelling library for use of the Church people in the area.

In 1969 Mrs. Fay Green died. In her will she left $10,000 to the Weaverville Church to be used for repairing and caring for the Reeves Educational Building.

The church participated in the national Bishops' Call for Reconciliation Fund by contributing $605 the first year.

The Board voted to change the furnace from a coal burning furnace to a gas furnace at a cost of $5,000, using the fund established by Mrs. Green for upkeep of the Reeves Educational Building. The furnace was made in three units so that each unit might be used to heat separately, the sanctuary, the fellowship hall or the educational building.

An unusual evangelistic service was planned in 1970, called, "A Weekend for God." The Youth of the Church had a breakfast in the fellowship hall on Saturday morning. The women had a coffee that afternoon at the Fireplace Restaurant. On

Sunday morning the men had a breakfast at the church, then everybody came together for the 11 a.m. worship service. The Rev. John Lowder, former pastor, was invited to preach at this service. Later in the week the church gave a dinner for the Church School teachers and the Rev. Parker paid tribute to these workers for their loyalty.

The Lucy Weaver Posey Bookshelf in the Primary Department was established by Mrs. Lynn Weaver with a gift of 14 children's books for small children. Later other books were added and the children enjoyed them very much.

The cement walk leading to the front doors of the church was widened and repaved, as a gift from the Glen West Family. It was made wide enough for a car to back up to the edge of the portico.

By 1970 the budget had grown to $27,056 for the year. The pastor's salary was $5,900, with a $1,300 travel allowance.

Plans were made to open a Kindergarten at the church. The committee in charge included Gene Yarbrough, David and Dot Walker, Helen Boone, the Jerry Burnettes, Mrs. Lynn Weaver and the ministers of the Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches. Mrs. William Ward was chosen as teacher, with Janet Burnette as treasurer. Tuition was $20 per month for Methodists and $25 monthly for others. Cabinets were built and painted by volunteers. New draperies were donated by the Hadley Corporation. The Kindergarten was held in the Primary Classroom on the first floor of the educational building.

A careful check of the membership roll was made by the pastor, the church secretary and a committee to eliminate the names of persons who had moved away. Diplomatic letters were sent to all of these asking if they wished to continue their membership in the church. Many names were removed.

The Board deemed it wise to rent a safety deposit box at the bank in which to keep church deeds and valuable church papers. The new insurance policy set a valuation of $175,000 on the church and $15,000 on the parsonage, with a premium of $707 annually.

A Council on Ministries was organized during the Rev. Parker's tenure. Greeters were scheduled to work in pairs at the Sunday morning service. The Council on Ministries planned a Lay Witness Mission at the Church. The Christmas program this year was planned by the Young People, a religious pageant in the sanctuary, followed by a Christmas tree and treats for the Church School children in the fellowship hall.

A proverbial problem that kept coming up at the Administrative Board time after time was the poor work done by the janitor of the church. After a number of discussions a committee was appointed to study the problem and make recommendations to the Board. They agreed that there was a general lack of supervision, plus the fact that the janitor did not have the right kind of equipment with which to work, which contributed to the poor work. The Board voted to buy a wet and dry mop for large buildings, a scrubber and a buffer to be used on the floors.

The District Superintendent asked that all officers of the church prepare written reports to be given at Quarterly Conference, so that these could be filed with church records. An old piano in the church was given to the Negro Community Center.

In the spring of 1970 the State Fire Inspector made a careful check and safety survey of the church. He required the church to purchase a fire extinguisher for the kitchen and remove all inflammable materials from storage in the boiler room of the church.

The long planned Lay Witness Mission took place on April 30, 1971. Bill Purcell of this church was chairman and Paul Metcalf of Greenville, Tennessee was coordinator. It was a beautiful weekend and the Sunday morning service was packed with people. The whole congregation was greatly uplifted by the experience, especially the folks who were hosts to the 14 workers who came to help with the mission.

In March a formal request came from the District Superintendent asking that this church agree to become a Mother church to the Pleasant Grove Union Church, and that our pastor preach there two Sundays a month. A Presbyterian and a Baptist minister preached the other two Sundays. Pleasant Grove had 41 members, including ten Methodist families. They agreed to pay $1,500 on the pastor's salary. The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee came to the Administrative Board with the request. The Rev. Parker agreed to the proposition. The Board asked the District Superintendent to call a Church Conference. The District Superintendent replied by saying that the request was out of order. He referred the matter back to the Board. The Board then agreed, with the consent of the Rev. Parker. The relationship has worked well through the years. The Rev. Parker made a special effort to draw the Youth of the Pleasant Grove Church into the M. Y. F. of this church, and the children into a joint Vacation Church School. This was done with Weaverville and Pleasant Grove teachers serving side by side.

The Board gave $50 to the budget of the Daniel Boone Boy Scout Council to help finance a ministerial student to serve as chaplain during the summer camp. Permission was granted to the Buncombe County Health Department to operate a Well Baby Clinic in the Kindergarten room of the educational building once a month. Another Girl Scout Troop was given permission to meet in the fellowship hall. Mrs. Peg Neal moved her office from this church to her home in Asheville. In July a class in artificial respiration and heart massage was conducted at the church by Mrs. Rose Spittle, R. N.

As the fall approached many problems arose about needed repairs in the church. The stained glass windows needed broken places mended, the columns at the front of the church needed repairing and painting, the gutters were rusty and the sound chambers of the organ were out of adjustment. It kept the Trustees busy trying to get everything done before cold weather.

A program was planned to help the average Lay person understand the rules and organization of his church. Each member was given a detailed copy of the church budget. There was a training session to explain what was included in the "Package Program" of Conference. A set of rules was drawn up for use of the kitchen. These rules were posted on the refrigerator door in the kitchen, concluding with, "This is your church property. The kitchen is used for fellowship by many church organizations. Please help us keep it orderly and clean. Thank you." Copies of these rules were given to every outside group using the kitchen.

The Grace Waugh Circle initiated a beautiful project -that of recording the Sunday morning worship service on tape, then taking the tape recorder to shut-ins, so that they might enjoy the service. The Board contributed $100 for a tape recorder and tapes. Four or five shut-ins used the tapes each week.

1972 was a short year of only 7½ months, scheduled by the W. N. C. Conference in order to make its year conform to the calendar year, instead of ending on June 1.

In early summer of 1972 the Rev. Parker suffered a heart attack and was in the hospital for weeks, then convalescent all summer. A love offering of $414 was given to Mrs. Parker for incidental expenses. Substitute ministers conducted services during these weeks.

The three Weaverville churches discussed a plan of uniting to have a summer recreational program for the young people of the whole community, to be funded by the churches. Nothing definite was organized, but a college student was employed to supervise recreation on the grammar school grounds.

A number of repair projects came up for the church and parsonage that summer. The back steps of the parsonage were rebuilt and the back porch underpinned with cement blocks. Aluminum siding was placed on the outside of the parsonage at a cost of $1,800. It improved the looks of the house a great deal.

At the last Quarterly Conference in 1972 L. A. Weaver was given a standing ovation for his excellent work as church treasurer for 16 years. His records were neat, accurate and comprehensive, analyzing the past and giving a preview of future financial responsibilities. The apportionments were set by the Conference and accepted by vote of the Administrative Board. This was referred to as, "the single figure apportionment." In 1972 this amount was raised form $700 to $798.

The Weaver College Alumni had their first reunion on the first Sunday in August, 1957. The 11 a.m. worship service was planned in honor of the alumni and the Rev. Lee Barnett, an alumnus of the college, was guest preacher. They had a picnic dinner afterwards in the fellowship hall, followed by a business session. They voted to meet each year at the same time and same place. Mr. and Mrs. Henry Powlas and Mrs. Gladys Reeves Lloyd were key people in making arrangements.

Mack Hyatt was organist of the church at this time. He arranged a concert by Helen Benner to raise funds for new choir robes. The event netted $174.

The memorials given to the church were kept in a separate fund to be used for something special. Several people asked that their memorials be given to a Music Fund. Mrs. Irene Clark joined the choir in 1972. Her husband was retired from his pastorate in Marshall. With Mrs. Clark's presence, there was such a notable improvement in the music that the Board sent her a letter of appreciation.

A change was made in the travel allowance for ministers at Conference. Instead of the church putting in its budget a definite amount for travel allowance, the minister was to be given 10 cents per mile for his travel, up to a designated amount. This was to standardize the procedure for all churches. The Rev. Parker's salary was raised to $8,500.

Kyle Boone served several months as church treasurer, then Mrs. Clara Gaddy assumed that responsibility.

It was a happy day for the church when the Rev. Parker returned to his pulpit after eight weeks' convalescence. The church members made every effort to do everything possible to relieve him of as much work as they could. He was greatly loved.

The organist was having a great deal of trouble with the organ. The speakers on either side of the choir loft were out of adjustment, and the organist could not determine how loudly he was playing. Mrs. Clark was authorized to contact an expert and have the matter corrected. New choir robes were ordered. A new cabinet was built downstairs so that the robes could be properly hung during the week. The cost of the robes was $1,336.26 and the cabinet $300.

The Rev. Parker made a special plea for members to visit newcomers to Weaverville, saying in part, "We need to show warmth, friendliness, and interest in the new people moving into our area."

At the end of the Conference year, there was a sudden change in ministers. The church had been notified that Rev. Parker would remain for his fifth year.

Suddenly the Bishop called the District Superintendent asking that the church release him to go to the Lebanon United Methodist Church in High Point at an increase in salary. The church reluctantly bid him God speed. The Rev. Don Payne came to Weaverville as minister in June 1973.

A new church sign was erected with memorials sent to the church after the death of John C. Wright. The sign was designed and put in place by Kyle Boone, architect, at a cost of $606. Allan Rice's brick mason did the foundation work gratis.

The death of Mrs. Anna Lee Styles occurred in 1973. She was a famous dramatic reader and actress in her younger days. She had taught many ministers and other speakers better speech techniques. Her last years were spent in the Methodist Home in Charlotte. She was one of Western North Carolina's best dramatists.

The value of the church and the parsonage was reconsidered for insurance purposes.

The importance of Youth Work in the church was an emerging concern. The Board voted to employ a Duke Divinity School student for the summer months of 1974. Such a project would cost the church only room and board, plus transportation to and from Weaverville.

Mrs. Irene Clark was serving as choir director and assistant organist at no salary, while the organist, Mack Hyatt, was getting $1,300 per year. The Board voted to send her a gift of a $150 check. She had told the pastor that she could only earn a small amount and retain her full allowance from Social Security.

Mrs. Clark reported that an organ expert had said that the organ would require about $1,000 in repair work to get the right tone and volume. This would include new tone units, plus an additional two units.

In January 1974 Al White was elected Chairman of the Administrative Board, succeeding William Reeves who had served in that position for 16 years. The Lay Speakers certified by this church were David Walker, Al White and Mrs. John Wright. New stoles were ordered for the choir, so that they would have all of the liturgical colors. They were from C. M. Almy & Son, New York, everything cut out ready to be put together. The women of the church made the stoles, thereby saving half the cost of the finished garments.

The W. S. C. S. gave the church $100 as a starter fund for renovating the fellowship hall. By April the fund had grown to $800.

An Easter Sunrise Service of the three Weaverville churches was held at Ashlawn Gardens of Memory on Highway 25.

The apportionments to be paid by the church grew rapidly every year. In 1964 the amount paid was $6,400 and in 1974 it was $7,800.

Imagine the surprise of the congregation when they discovered that the ministerial student from Duke Divinity School for summer work here was a young lady, Wendy Miller from Maryland! That summer proved delightful for the entire church, especially the young people.

Danny Wright organized a Church Softball Team to play in the Asheville Church Softball League. The Board paid $92 for their gloves and other equipment. . . .and our team won the trophy that season.

The perennial janitor troubles came up for consideration again. The Board

appointed a committee to draft a schedule of activities, and post it for Cletus Hunter to follow. It had duties to be performed every week, those to be done once a month, and others once a quarter. The Rev. Payne agreed to supervise his work.

An appraiser was hired to establish the value of the church and the parsonage, so that adequate insurance might be secured. The value of the church was increased from $175,000 to $342,254 and the parsonage from $15,000 to $44,426. The church was insured for $310,000 and the parsonage for $40,000, plus $15,000 for contents of the parsonage. Personal liability was increased from $25,000 to $100,000. The premium was $972 per year.

The Board voted to make a complete list of repairs that needed to be made on the educational building. Kyle Boone, architect, presented plans for remodeling the fellowship hall at an estimated cost of $25,000, with Houston Munday as contractor. This included the floor, ceiling, walls and new stairs leading to the basement. The trustees were authorized to borrow $15,000. R. C. Brackett made all of the suggested repairs in the educational building.

Wendy Miller came to work from June 1, 1974 to August 12, 1974. She had a small apartment in the house next door to Dr. L. T. Sprinkle. She became a great favorite with the young people. Many happy plans were carried out that summer, but competition developed when Buncombe County adopted a county-wide recreational program, especially a summer theater production that required hours of rehearsal time.

After the summer program was ended at the church, the Rev. Payne questioned the advisability of trying to have a church summer recreational program, with the young people feeling the pull to go to the place where the greatest number of other young people were gathered -it made so many conflicts of interest for them.

The Federal Program of Food for the Elderly asked if they might use this church's fellowship hall as a center to serve meals. But construction was underway and the new floor had to season for six weeks before it could be used. So the Agency went to the Baptist Church. Our church was without its fellowship hall for three months, during construction.

The Federal Savings and Loan notified the church that there was a savings account of $6,317, which was the remaining $5,000 of the bequest left by Mrs. Green, plus the accumulated interest.

The renovation project for the fellowship hall was cut from $25,000 to $13,000. A campaign was launched for pledges to the fund. The church had 200 families, but only 38 families made pledges, so work continued on the drive for funds.

Larry Sprinkle was commended by the Board for all of the hours he had spent working on the organ to put it in good repair. The Board voted to repay him for an organ manual he had bought and for the long distance calls he had made in connection with the project. They gave him a token payment for his work. The salary of the organist and choir director was equalized, each to receive $1,750 per year, Mrs. Ruth Stegall as organist and Mrs. Irene Clark as choir director.

The Board agreed to sponsor a Cub Scout Pack of 63 boys, at the request of Curtis Bitner. They voted to pay the $30 it would take to get them organized. Later they voted to pay the registration fee for any Cub Scout unable to pay the $2.

In January 1975 the floor was laid in the fellowship hall at a cost of $4,050. It was a beautiful terrazo floor. The ceiling was estimated to cost $1,385 and the new stairway $2,500.

The janitor's salary was raised form $2,100 to $2,300, and he was asked to spend seven hours per day working at the church.

The Board voted to pay the $35 entrance fee for the Volley Ball Team to enter the Asheville Church League.

The W. N. C. Conference asked that each church make a contribution to World Hunger. They suggested that each member do without a meal once a week and give the price of the meal to World Hunger. This was to be done on a voluntary basis -but not too many Weaverville Methodists did without meals!

There was another robbery in the church. Someone forced an entrance and took a number of things from the pastor's office and the secretary's office. The Buncombe County detectives investigated, but the robbery was never solved.

During the summer there were several discussions of the Methodists and Baptists about straightening the property line in between the two denominations. The Methodists hoped to have enough land to make a driveway around back of the church. The Bapists would like all of the land up to Reeves Street. The property was surveyed and blueprints made, but the representatives of the two churches could not get together on what they would be willing to give and take.

The trustees were authorised to borrow $3,000 to finish the fellowship hall. They asked that the exact cost of the entire project be posted so that every member might see its total cost, for another $1,000 would be needed to finish the job.

The Asheville District Training School for Church School workers was planned in three separate parts of the District. The Weaverville Church was host to one school on Sunday afternoon from 4 to 9 p.m. There were 200 in attendance.

In April 1975 the Rev. Payne had a heart attack. After spending three weeks in the hospital he went to his home on the Ox Creek Road for his convalescence. He was out of the pulpit for eight weeks, then worked on a limited basis for a while. Different ministers preached each Sunday.

The Board passed a resolution that since the Town furnished water to the church free of charge, that no car wash permits would be given groups, other than those of the church, and then only if the project was for the benefit of the church.

Statistics showed us that during the past year that there had been a 50 percent drop in attendance at Church School.

The women of the church gave an oldfashioned ice cream supper on the church lawn one Saturday afternoon to help pay on the $3,000 debt on the fellowship hall. The men gave a pancake supper for the same project, but no amount is mentioned as proceeds for either event.

The Board commended Allan Rice as Scout leader. He had followed Conley Hyer as Boy Scout Master. Rice asked for assistants who could help the boys who were working on merit badges.

In August 1975 news reached the church about a proposed plan to establish a Methodist Retirement Home in the Asheville area. Members of the church who might be interested in eventually entering such a home were asked to sign a card stating their interest. The Givens Estate had given property for the home on the Sweeten Creek Road.

On Saturday, November 29, 1975 the Rev. Don Payne had a second heart attack and died soon after arriving at the hospital. The church did everything possible

for the Payne family and asked Mrs. Payne to remain in the parsonage as long as she needed to be there, but a short time after Christmas she moved to her home on the Ox Creek Road.

During his tenure a new Young Adult Class had been organized in the Church School. After his death they voted to name the class in his memory. The Don Payne Class was destined to be the instruments through whom new winds of evangelism would sweep across the congregation.

The Rev. Thomas Swofford, a long time friend of the Paynes and a retired minister, had charge of the memorial service, along with Dr. Herman Nicholson, Asheville District Superintendent.

The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee met with Dr. Nicholson on December 7 to discuss what would be best to do. The Committee asked if the Rev. Swofford might come as interim pastor. Dr. Nicholson agreed to ask him and he made all subsequent arrangements. The Swoffords came to the parsonage in early January and had a beautiful seven months ministry here, forming many lasting friends.

Part IV 1976-1978

On the first Monday in January 1976, when Mr. Swofford attended his first meeting with the Board, there was a record attendance. Twenty-three members were present. Memorial gifts amounting to $907 were sent in memory of the Rev. Payne from all over the Conference. The Rev. W. C. Clark had died the previous summer and memorials amounting to $401 had been sent to the church. His wife asked that these memorials be used toward a new piano for the sanctuary.

The winter of 1976 was very, very cold and the cost of gas had risen much higher. So there was an alarming increase in the fuel bill for heat in the church. The budget had included $1,800 for church utilities, and already the gas bill had exceeded $2,375. Strict plans were made to turn thermostats off in unused rooms and signs were made for all doors to keep them closed except on Sunday.

Larry Sprinkle brought a new idea before the officials of the church -the possibility of having a real pipe organ. Trinity United Methodist Church had installed a beautiful new organ and they offered the parts of their old organ they would not use to the Weaverville Church. William Reeves gave a history of the Trinity organ which had originally been in Central U. M. Church. The Board asked Larry Sprinkle to estimate what it would cost to install the organ, buy the necessary parts, make needed changes in the sanctuary and bring these figures to the next Board meeting.

In February, Mr. Sprinkle presented his estimates as follows: cost to remodel the church to install the organ, $3,000; to rebuild the organ, parts and console, $3,556; the antiphonal organ, $1,500, making a total of approximately $10,000. The Board voted to delay the decision until the sentiment of the church members could be determined. The matter was presented to the congregation.

There was a call meeting of the Board on February 11 to discuss how to clear the debt on the fellowship hall renovation. William Reeves offered to underwrite the cost of the organ on five conditions: 1. The installed organ be in memory of the Rev. Don Payne; 2. Funds now in the Payne memorial be applied to the organ fund (Mrs. Payne's consent already secured), and the sale price of the old organ be applied to this fund; 3. The indebtedness on the fellowship hall be repaid before offer is effective; 4. Funds will be made available March 7, 1976, if indebtedness is paid by that date; 5. Bronze plaque as memorial to Don Payne on the

organ and appropriate plaque in memory of his parents and in honor of his wife be installed in choir loft.

The Board made plans to have L. A. Weaver explain the proposition to the congregation on Sunday, February 15 and to have Mrs. Irene Clark speak about the organ. A Church Conference was set for February 22. The church treasurer gave a definite figure of $1,553.43 as the balance due on the fellowship hall debt. Dr. L. T. Sprinkle moved that the church accept the gift and Ben Clark seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The resolution of acceptance by the congregation read, "Resolved: that the congregation of the Weaverville United Methodist Church in a Church Conference on February 22, 1976 do accept the gift of an organ, subject to the conditions outlined in a letter from the donor to James A. White February 4, 1976. A copy of the letter is attached. 2. Resolved: that the congregation of the Weaverville United Methodist Church expresses to the donor its deep appreciation for this generous gift, and the debt of gratitude is hereby expressed. T. H. Swofford, Pastor, Recording Secretary."

At the March Board meeting William Reeves was given a standing ovation for his offer to underwrite the installation of the organ. A committee of four from the Board raised $2,700 to redecorate the sanctuary. They were Dr. L. T. Sprinkle, Denver Redmond, L. A. Weaver and Ben Clark. The Reeves gift covered the installation and remodeling of the organ.

Larry Sprinkle got busy and for months worked to get the new organ installed. Kirk Redmond spent hundreds of hours and Steve Walker assisted many, many hours, all volunteer labor. It took a long, long time, but the beauty of the organ made it worthwhile to wait. It was a wonderful Sunday when Ruth Stegall played her first numbers for the worship service.

In May 1976 the Board decided to change insurance agencies from Garrett Insurance Company of Asheville to Wachovia Bank Insurance. The new coverage was better and more reasonable. The Board also voted to pay the salary of the interim minister for June, as well as the salary for the incoming minister.

The church bade farewell to the Swoffords and greeted the Rev. Dayle Groh and his family from Hickory as the new pastor. It had been a long period of adjustment for the congregation, the Paynes and the Swoffords. Mrs. Payne gave her husband's books to the church library. When the Union Thanksgiving Service was held in November in the Presbyterian Church flowers were placed on the altar in memory of the Rev. Payne by the Methodists.

The church schedule soon got back to a normal keel. Mrs. Jane Reagan was honored for all of the time and money she had given in furnishings for the parsonage, as a member of the Parsonage Committee. Mrs. Van Proyen gave an electric fan for the choir loft. The Clark memorial fund had reached $546.29.

The Board voted to repay the pastor $238 on his moving expense, the amount over the Conference allowance for moving. He asked that the church allow an increase in the number of hours the secretary worked, for they were planning to make a detailed analysis of the church roll, to bring it up to date. The 1977 budget was $45,480, and the pastor's salary was $11,500 with a travel allowance of 14 cents per mile, up to a designated amount.

A survey was made of the broken places in the stained glass windows of the sanctuary. A representative of the Cathedral Glass Co. of Ormond Beach, Florida gave an estimate of $2,250 for repairing all of the windows. The supervisor of the group said that the Good Shepherd window is of Tiffany Glass and is worth thousands of dollars. Tiffany's name is not on the glass, but only Tiffany knew the formula to make robe glass with a ripple in it, as is shown in Christ's robe in the window.

Later it was estimated at a value of $54,000. The Weaver window is also very valuable and all of the windows in the church were valued at $112,000. The repair work was completed in the summer of 1977.

As soon as possible the church had plexi-glass put on the outside of each window to protect the priceless glass.

Sometime during these recent years the young people's organization was given a new name. Instead of Methodist Youth Fellowship, it was United Methodist Youth, usually referred to as UMY.

In recent years several members have made lovely gifts to the church. Mrs. Edwin West gave a beautiful silver baptismal bowl. Mrs. Lawrence T. Sprinkle gave the white dorsal at the back of the organ. She and Dr. Sprinkle initiated the project to install new cathedral type lights in the sanctuary. John A. Reagan and his brother, Palmer Reagan, gave two flower stands for the chancel in memory of their parents, John A. and Alice Palmer Reagan.

A. D. Closson gave an electric refrigerator to the church kitchen. After the death of the Rev. C. W. Bates many years ago, Mrs. Bates gave the lovely lighted cross in the center of the organ grill at the back of the choir. Mrs. George Ward had carpet placed on the stairs leading from the vestibule of the church to the fellowship hall.

Many other gifts have been made by those who loved their church, but records are not always complete enough so that their names may be recalled years later, even though the gifts are still cherished and used.

Winds of Change 1976 - 1978

When the Rev. Tom Swofford left this church in June, 1976, he said, "This church is ready for something beautiful to happen to it -an awakening- and I would love to be here to see it happen!" But he was a retired minister and felt the call to return to his home in Forest City, N. C., yet his prophecy became a reality. It was the dawning of a new spirit of evangelism which came imperceptibly, moving slowly but surely in the hearts of the people, whose spirits were receptive to its quiet winds of change. It was as if a steady wind blew over a field of wheat and the grain-laden stalks bowed gracefully in compliance with the direction in which the wind was blowing.

The spirit of the wind received its impetus from many sources. The hearts and minds of the people were in a listening mood. The Rev. Dayle Groh came to the church, bringing a rare gift, not only of being a good pastor and friend, but one who knew how to get people involved and enjoy the togetherness of working as a group. A new door began to open as several young couples joined this church. Then the Rev. Margaret Marshall, a retired minister living at Brooks-Howell Home in Asheville, united with the church, later accepting the place as teacher of the Don Payne Young Adult Class. She shared her love and wide experience in such a way that there was a new radiance among the young people. The Bob Brown Class joined in the new projects suggested and both classes grew rapidly in membership and in a joyful fellowship. This was very beautiful to witness and to be a part of.

During Advent in 1976 these two groups conducted a series of Sunday evening services called, "God With Us." It was entirely different from anything the church had ever had before -a sort of, "Journey Inward - Journey Outward." Those who attended were deeply moved, and the spirit of evangelism grew even brighter.

Early in the spring personal growth classes were held, under the leadership of the Rev. Groh. Twenty people completed the course called, "Ten Brave Christians." This was the year that Billy Graham conducted a crusade at the Asheville City auditorium. Many people of the church attended this series of services. Several took training to be crusade workers.

From these three events was born a Men's Sharing Group and three Bible Study Groups. The men met at 8 a. m. on Sundays, rain, sleet or sun. The Bible study classes had excellent attendance. Some who had never taught a Church School class became leaders of these groups.

In 1977 the church began a monthly newsletter and named it, "Soundings." Rev. Margaret Marshall was named editor, with Mrs. Fred Pennell as her assistant. An editorial committee of about ten persons asked different members to write an article or story each month -and this created much interest.

Out of the Bible Study groups came a visitation program. A survey of the church roll was made. The names of all who did not attend services were listed and these were visited, as were newcomers to the village and those who did not belong to any church.

A five day evangelistic meeting was held with the Rev. Harry Sherrill of Mount Airy, N. C. as guest minister. A Home Coming Service was held in July, 1977, the first such service in many years. The Rev. Bryce Parker of High Point was invited to come back and preach. All of his friends were delighted to have the opportunity of being with him and his family again. There was a big picnic dinner in the fellowship hall after church and the buzz of conversation showed how much everybody was enjoying the occasion.

The new organ was completed in 1978. It had taken about 18 months to get it ready. In 1978 a Service of Dedication of the Don Payne Memorial Organ was held. William C. Reeves presented the organ loft to the church, dedicated to the memory of his mother, Mrs. E. S. Reeves, and the organ in memory of the Rev. Don Payne. Four generations of the Payne family were present for the occasion, his mother, his wife and brother, his three children and two grandchildren.

Mrs. Irene Clark directed a choir of 30 voices as they sang three anthems selected by Mrs. Lib Payne. Mrs. Ruth Stegall presented a 30 minute organ concert to conclude the program. The women of the church were hostesses at a tea after the concert.

In May, 1978 there was a Discipleship Celebration at the church one weekend, with J. D. Teachey of Wallace, N. C. as coordinator. Several Lay Witness workers assisted in the mission and almost every member of the church participated in the event. Personal Growth Classes had grown in membership, so that more than 100 people were participating in the sessions.

Early in the summer months a group of young mothers gathered to promote the organization of a Pre-School for 3 and 4 year olds. Mrs. Debbie Johnson, an experienced teacher from Virginia, was the leader of the group. After the plan received the sanction of the Administrative Board, plans began to materialize, so that the Weaverville Christian Pre-School opened in September, with a teacher for 3 year olds and one for 4 year olds. The classes met in the kindergarten and primary rooms of the educational building.

In September 1978 memorial gifts to the piano fund had reached an amount that made it possible to purchase a new Kimball baby grand piano for the sanctuary, as a memorial to several deceased members.

It was interesting to watch the new life in the Men's Brotherhood during the preceding two years. The men met monthly for breakfast at the church. They prepared the meal themselves. . .and washed all the dishes afterwards! Ralph Freeman and Rick Scarbrough were two of its main leaders.

The Boy Scout Troop was very active under the leadership of Dale Pennell and Tom Haynie.

The program of having a Family Night supper each month enabled the people to become better acquainted with the different departments of work in the church. The programs featured mission speakers, World Hunger presentations, United Methodist Youth, dramas about church visitation and many other concerns of the church. The circles of United Methodist Women took turns in being hostess for these covered dish suppers.

The number of young people in the church had grown during the preceding months. There was a Senior U. M. Y. and a Junior U. M. Y. The need for adequate leadership of these two groups led to the employment of the Rev. Kerry Fralic as Director of Youth Activities. He had formerly been connected with the Young Life movement and shared the facilities of Young Life's Windy Gap Camp with the young people of the church several times.

A new cooperative group was formed in January, 1978, called the North Buncombe Community Christian Ministry. It was sponsored by the North Buncombe Ministerial Association, whose membership included the pastors of churches in the northern part of the county. The Rev. Dayle Groh was chairman of this group.

Under the guidance of the Ministerial Association a Board of Directors for the Ministry was chosen, representing Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist denominations, lay and clergy. The Rev. John Kelley was chosen as chairman of the

directors. All of the churches supporting the new Ministry made cash donations to its work. When requests came from underprivileged families for assistance, these requests were referred to the Rev. Kelley and the directors. This helped to centralize the charitable work for the whole area, instead of risking overlapping by different churches on some cases and neglecting others.

After ten months of operation the Ministry reported that it had received $2,310.93 in gifts from churches and individuals and had spent $1,900.99 in helping families in crisis. An office was rented in the Masonic building on College Street in Weaverville. The directors spent three months improving the center with volunteer labor and gifts from interested persons.

On September 25, 1978 they had open house at the Center. Plans were made to have two volunteers on duty at the Center from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. each week from Monday through Friday. The ministers took turns being on duty also. Food shelves were donated and a supply of staple groceries was placed on the shelves to be given out as needed.

The Center was a satellite of Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry and its policies were identical with theirs. All funds were channelled and dispersed by one treasurer.

This new Ministry took the place of the old Christmas Cheer Fund, which was a once a year deal. N. B. C. C. M. was in operation year around. It received the support of the Weaverville Town Council who provided two desks and some chairs as furnishings for the center.

This project proved again the truth in the town's motto, "Weaverville is a good place for your home." For here, in this mountain town, one could find churches that cared, not only for their own members but also for those who were in need of being cared for.

United Methodist Women

The women's missionary group of the Weaverville Church is one of the oldest in this end of the state, dating back more than a hundred years. The earliest recorded minutes in the file are dated October, 1879, and the group was well organized with planned programs at that time.

Through the years it has been one of the strongest organizations in the church. Several ministers have commented on its wonderful work in their annual reports recorded in Quarterly Conference minutes. At one time it was the fourth largest Woman's Society in the Asheville District, superceded only by Central, Hendersonville and Trinity Methodist Church. Its per capita giving to missions has been far above the national average, some years as much as $16 per member, when the national average was $7.

The group has had four names during the century. Its earliest name was Woman's Missionary Society, sometimes in the olden days they called themselves Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. In 1939 when the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the Methodist Episcopal Church, North, and the Methodist Protestant Church united to become The Methodist Church, the name was Woman's Society of Christian Service. In 1968 when the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church combined into The United Methodist Church, the name was changed to Women's Society of Christian Service. In 1974 in a general reorganization of the church, they became United Methodist Women.

Through all the years the members have remained true to their mission of being concerned about all of God's people over the entire world. Their stated purpose is, "The organized unit of UNITED METHODIST WOMEN shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ."

In 1879 the minutes were written in a fine Spencerian hand in a little 6 x 7¾ inch book telling about their meetings up to 1886. The wording is quaint and simple, such as, "An appropriate sensible lesson was read by the president, then a beautiful missionary hymn was read and sung by Prof. McCarthy. "Later, "The meeting was opened with reading and prayer by the president, then the Society preceded to tend to business."

In 1881 the secretary wrote, "When the roll was called each member answering with a verse of Scripture. After attending to the usual business of the Society and speaking socially with each other for a short time the meeting adjourned." Another time it read, "A committee of three was appointed to ascertain the number of families destitute of the Bible in the neighborhood," and, "The Society did not meet this month, it being so near commencement and it was raining on the day of the meeting."

The women often met at the parsonage and met a couple of times in the chapel of Weaverville College. The minister attended their meetings very often. They used The Missionary Advocate as a source of program material. Topics of some of their programs were, "Women's Pleadings and Prayers for the Missionary Cause," "Reasons Why We Attend the Women's Missionary Society," and an essay on, "Missions in Mexico," often led by the pastor.

They met monthly, the attendance ranging from six to 19. One note said, "Only six members answered their names, but we felt that the Lord was with us." Their offerings were from 70 cents to $3.25 per meeting. Once the minister gave 25 cents and it is duly recorded in the minutes. They took up a special offering of

$1.00 for the Seminole Indians. They had a "Dime Reading" at the local Boarding House, which was probably a program of readings for which they paid a dime admission. This was at the Dr. J. A. Reagan house in March 1883. They elected a delegate to attend the Asheville District Meeting. They formally recommended two of their number as "worthy intellectually and morally to go as missionaries to Brazil."

Many pioneer women are mentioned in the membership, Mrs. M. W. Kennedy, early president, Mrs. Mary A. E. Reagan, Misses Sallie and Ellen Weaver, Mrs. Goolsby, Mrs. T. M. Pickens, Mrs. Robert Wesley Pickens, Miss Alice Hoofnagle and others.

By 1908 they called themselves the Women's Foreign Missionary Society and the minutes are written in a legal size notebook. Their programs evidently covered a wider horizon. They had made a pledge of $50 per year to missions and they had a hard time raising the whole amount. Their attendance varied from 12 to 33 at the monthly sessions. Mrs. C. C. Brown, Mrs. R. W. Pickens and Mrs. J. J. Reagan were leaders of the day.

They used The Missionary Pioneer, which later became The Missionary Voice, as resource material in their programs. Each time they met they had a "Missionary Drill," evidently featured in their magazine. China, Brazil, Mexico, Japan, Korea and other foreign fields were subjects studied. One meeting was a social gathering at the church when Anna Lee Ross gave a number of readings.

A motion at one meeting read, "We extend a cordial greeting to strangers to meet with us at any of our meetings." The church's first memorial fund was established by Mrs. Robert H. Weaver in a gift made in memory of her little daughter.

Mention is made of their chosen delegates attending the Asheville District Meetings and the sessions of the Conference organization. A report of these meetings was read to the local group from the "North Carolina Christian Advocate."

The 1912 officers listed include Mrs. J. N. Gill, president, four vice-presidents, recording secretary, treasurer, with foreign and home missions kept in separate accounts, and an agent for The Missionary Voice. The following year they recorded 24 subscriptions to the "North Carolina Christian Advocate." The minutes say, "Our pastor made us a very interesting and helpful talk which was appreciated by the Society."

They must have had some meetings in their homes by then, for the secretary wrote of "dainty refreshments," "ice cream and cake" or "cake and coffee" having been served.

In 1914 the program had an annual theme of "The Conquest of the Cross," each month with a different area of concern; among nations, over sickness, over self-indulgence, the heart of the world and other things. The women of this era had a deep sense of responsibility to their church and were very loyal to their missionary society.

The Children's Society, called "The Light Bearers," had 24 members and received special commendation from the District for their excellent work. Years later some of the adults remembered the good tea cakes they used to have as children at Light Bearer's meetings at the home of their leader, Mrs. C. C. Brown.

Many social concerns crept into their programs, for mention is made of a discussion on temperance, Mormonism, and "assisting the poor and destitute in our neighborhoods." One month they recorded having paid for new furniture for the parsonage. Another time they planned a Bazaar.

On September 5, 1939 the Women's Society had a worship service in observance of their 60th anniversary. The program was held in the sanctuary, with the Rev. Harold Groce, pastor, as speaker. His subject was, "God's Trumpeters."

Mrs. John A. Reagan, president, was the leader. The minutes say, "She conducted the roll call of the 19 charter members of the auxiliary, two of whom were present. A list of all the women who had served as president was read. She recognized those who had served 30 years or more as active members, Mrs. J. N. Gill, Mrs. Clyde Leonard, Mrs. C. H. Shope, Mrs. Grover Brown, Miss Fannie Hoofnagle, Mrs. M. A. Yost, Mrs. Edwin Reeves and Mrs. Georgia Weaver. Those who had passed on, who had been members a long time were Mrs. Lou Weaver, 57 years, Miss Lillie Parker, 51 years, Mrs. Eliza Reagan, 58 years, Mrs. C. C. Brown, 57 years and Mrs. J. J. Reagan, 60 years. One interesting fact was that as many as six generations in one family had been members of the Society."

Miss Amy Hackney, Asheville District Secretary, paid tribute to the Society for its splendid work. She presented to Mrs. J. J. Reagan a small gold pin, an emblem signifying that she was a life member of the Woman's Society. This membership was the first such award given by the Weaverville Society, and was presented to Mother Reagan for her 60 years of faithful service. This recognition meant that a gift of $25 had been given to missions in her honor and the pin was an insignia of the membership.

This was the first in a series of 80 special memberships given to members in subsequent years. A list of these is given later in the history.

In September 1940, after the three branches of Methodism had united, a charter service was held in the church for the Woman's Society of Christian Service, the new name. Mrs. John Keetch, president, was in charge of the memorable event held on Sunday afternoon.

Each member inscribed her name on the Charter Roll and there were 87 signatures. A Charter Service planned by the Woman's Division of the national Board of Missions was used for each local society. The minutes conclude with these words, "Thus ends an historic action in the life of the Weaverville Methodist Church, the charter enrollment of the Woman's Society of Christian Service. May God's blessing rest upon the work of this hour and bring it to glorious fruition."

Two national magazines, The Methodist Woman and The World Outlook were used as program resources for monthly meetings. Planned program books were sent from national headquarters. Each of the five circles took its turn in presenting the program at General Meeting, which was held on the first Monday afternoon of each month.

The Society planned four mission studies each year, the courses recommended by the Woman's Division. By following a prescribed standard of number of hours spent in classes and participation by all members, they received Jurisdictional credit for these studies. The W. N. C. Conference urged women to study missions, both local and world.

In 1968 when the Methodist Church was merged with the Evangelical United Brethren Church, the Women's Society of Christian Service felt a new emphasis of spiritual development. One of their finest projects was the annual service in observance of the Call to Prayer and Self-Denial. The name of one magazine was changed, from The Methodist Woman to Response. The World Outlook remained the same.

The Weaverville women kept up their wonderful work, faithfully carrying out the programs and projects sponsored by the national Women's Division. They attended District Meetings and sent delegates to the Annual Meetings at the Conference at

Lake Jualuska. Their annual budget had reached $1,500 per year, the major portion being given as mission pledge, the remainder for local church and community projects.

One of their cherished projects was to be a supportive community for Brooks-Howell Home for Retired Missionaries and Deaconesses, established in Asheville in 1956. For a few years the Weaverville women went to the home one day each month to sew and mend the infirmary linen and the garments of the residents. They called themselves, "The Sew and So Forth Club."

One member of the Weaverville group, Mrs. John Wright, served 10 years as Chairman of Public Relations in the Asheville District Woman's Society, then 14 years as Chairman of Public Relations in the Western North Carolina Conference Woman's Society. During this time she was also editor of Women's Page in the North Carolina Christian Advocate. She then resumed her original office for the Asheville District United Methodist Women.

In 1974 there was a general reorganization of the entire structure of Methodist women's work, from the national down to the local level. The name chosen was United Methodist Women. The circles were called Interest Groups. In this unit they were the Matilda Dryman Group, the Grace Waugh Group, the Minevia Brittain Young Women's Group and the Louise Wright Bible Study Group.

They worked together quite well. The programs were less formal, with an increasing interest in social concerns. There were no mission study classes just for women, as women merged into churchwide studies. Gradually women were given more places of leadership and responsibility in the governing bodies of the church.

The 1974 organization included a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, secretary of Program Resources, four coordinators (Christian Personhood, Supportive Community, Christian Social Involvement and Christian Global Concerns), two chairpersons (nominations and membership).

The stated purpose of all United Methodist Women is, "The organized unit of UNITED METHODIST WOMEN shall be a community of women whose PURPOSE is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church."

Special Memberships

Woman's Society of Christian Service

1941 Mrs. J. J. Reagan

1943 Mrs. Jennie B. Gill
Mrs. Fred O. Dryman

1944 Mrs. T. H. Weaver
Mrs. W. C. Woods

1945 Mrs. Lucy Posey
Mrs. M. A. Yost
Mrs. John Wright

1946 Mrs. John V. Erskine
Mrs. John A. Reagan
Mrs. Ed Reeves
Mrs. Stanley West

1947 Mrs. W. Guy Edwards
Mrs. W. G. Catlin

1948 Mrs. A. D. Closson

1949 Mrs. Mary Strang
Mrs. Jeanne Garrison

1951 Mrs. Grover C. Brown
Mrs. Clyde Leonard
Mrs. Marion J. Holcombe
Mrs. Paul S. Kennett

1952 Mrs. Wiley Garrison
Mrs. Doug C. Roberts
Mrs. J. Robert Reagan
Mrs. Marvin Garrison
Mrs. A. D. Weaver

1953 Mrs. Ralph Freeman

1955 Mrs. Margaret Willingham

1957 Mrs. E. T. West
Miss Pearl Weaver

1958 Miss Stacie Holcombe
Mrs. W. O. Barnard

1959 Mrs. Edwin C. West
Mrs. George B. Ward
Mrs. Ernest M. Reagan
Mrs. W. Arthur Robinson
Miss Nellie Mae Roberts
Mrs. Z. I. Walser
Miss Doris Sorrells
Mrs. B. F. Sorrells

1960 Mrs. W. Ernest Powell
Mrs. C. T. Gwaltney
Miss Bela Altman

1961 Mrs. N. T. Holcombe
Mrs. S. L. Teague

1962 Mrs. William Pruett
Mrs. M. W. Pyne
Mrs. Floree Stewart

1963 Mrs. Ewart Hobbs
Miss Minevia Brittain

1964 Mrs. Edward L. Loftin
Mrs. W. E. Sawyer

1965 Mrs. Clifton Holland
Mrs. E. P. Sams

1966 Miss Sarah McCain
Mrs. L. A. Weaver, Jr.
Miss Mary Ann Roberts

1967 Mrs. Doc Roberts
Mrs. Charles G. Smith

1968 Mrs. Harry Howell
Mrs. Lynn Weaver
Mrs. John Keetch
Mrs. Denver Redmond

Women's Society of Christian Service

1971 Mrs. Lad E. Ottofy

1973 Mrs. Henry Powlas
Mrs. Marvin Burley

United Methodist Women

1974 Mrs. James Al White
Mrs. Roger Spittle
Mrs. Shelby Hensley
Mrs. Fred Pennell

1975 Mrs. L. A. Weaver, Jr.
Miss Lelia Smith
Mrs. C. O. Stafford, Jr.

1976 Mrs. William C. Reeves
Mrs. Horace Smith
Mrs. Ben Clark
Mrs. Richard Robinson

1977 Mrs. Curtis Bitner
Mrs. Marion Yost

1979 Miss Rheba Barnard
Mrs. Don Brooks

Weaver College

Weaver College had a long and colorful history in its 61 years of operation in Weaverville. Its ideals influenced the lives of thousands of young people who passed through its doors. Almost 50 years after it was merged with Rutherford College and Brevard Institute to become the present Brevard College, its former students meet in annual reunion to relive the fun and fellowship of college days.

One of the best histories of the college is included in Dry Ridge, a history of Weaverville written by Miss Nell Pickens in 1962. Most of the information in this short sketch is taken from that source.

She writes, "The first school house used as a neighborhood school, was the old Salem Camp Ground Conference House, erected to entertain the Holston Conference in 1836. The Sons of the Temperance completed a building in 1854, known as the Masonic and Temperance Hall which was large enough to take care of the neighborhood school when it outgrew the Conference House. It was called the Masonic and Temperance High School or the Academy. It soon became a boarding school serving a large area around Dry Ridge.

"Dr. J. A. Reagan was principal until 1858. He was followed by J. H. Calfee who was principal from 1858 until 1862 when the war closed the doors for four years. The school was reopened in 1866. In 1872 the building was destroyed by fire. The section, benefitted by the old Academy, felt so strongly the need of an educational institution that a movement was started immediately, not only to rebuild, but to expand the work of the Institution. The people of the community were largely responsible for the success of the undertaking."

They banded together to build a sturdy structure made of bricks from a local brickyard in north Weaverville. The school was a large two-story building with six rooms downstairs and two halls above.

The institution was chartered on December 7, 1873 as Weaverville College, under a board of local trustees, independent of any denomination. Dr. James Americus Reagan was its first president. Montraville Weaver gave the ground on which this building, known as the Administration building, was located.

The Conference House erected in 1836 was built to entertain the Holston Conference of the Methodist Church and was also on the campus.

In 1883 the property was deeded to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and placed under the supervision of the Western North Carolina Conference of this church for the remainder of its history.

The Rev. Robert Wesley Pickens later gave an additional tract of land to the college. In 1886 a two-story white house was built as the president's home This still stands in almost its original form.

After 20 years the college had outgrown its buildings and the original Administrative building was enlarged to include four additional classrooms, a library and an auditorium. The student enrollment doubled during these years. The Coleman tract on which the old Salem Camp Ground had been located was purchased by college officials and the Church authorities sometime after 1883.

Crutchfield Hall was built in 1908 on the original tract of land.

In 1921 Mrs. Charles R. Moore gave Lake Junita and 20 acres of land to the college. The name of the lake was changed to Lake Louise in her honor. Through other gifts and purchases the campus grew to include 55 acres.

Skinner Hall, a boys dormitory, was a gift of Edward Skinner of the class of 1887, plus $20,000 from the Centenary Fund of the Methodist Church. H. A. Dunham of Asheville gave the Dunham Athletic Field in 1922 and the Alumni Association had it enlarged, adding a grandstand in 1926.

The college derived its income from the tuition fees of students, gifts from friends and funds from the Western North Carolina Conference.

Early in its history Weaverville College gave a Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts or a Bachelor of Sciences to those completing the required courses. After 1896 only the first two degrees were given. From 1912 until the college closed in 1934 the curriculum was planned for the first two years of college and the last two years of high school.

The name of the institution was changed to Weaver College in 1913.

There were many extra curricula activities, including the Delphian and Cliosophic Literary Societies for men, the Euterpean and Mnemosynean Societies for women, the Debate Council, the Dramatic Association, the Ministerial Association, the Publications Council and the Athletic Associations.

The first college annual, called "The Mountaineer," in the year of 1920 states, "For forty years this school has been a leader in moulding public opinion, in directing the intellectual life, and in disseminating a larger culture throughout the Western Section of North Carolina and her influence has been felt through all of the Southern States. Her larger history is written in the useful lives of hundreds of men and women who have gone out from her doors to enrich the life of the nation. Every lover of learning is proud of the record of the past and looks forward to greater things in the future for the college on the mountain top."

In the years immediately preceding 1934 the Methodist Church was trying to support three small struggling colleges in the western area of the state, Brevard Institute, Retherford College and Weaver College. Finally the powers-that-be decided that it would be better to merge the three institutions into one bigger school, supported by an adequate amount of money. Since the most recently constructed buildings were on the Brevard campus, the Church decided that Brevard should be the location of the merged institutions.

Weaver College, its faculty and student body had meant so very much to the community of Weaverville, economically and culturally, for so many years, it was hard to part with the college.

In 1957 the Weaver College Alumni planned a reunion at the Weaverville Methodist Church. So many old grads came and had such good fellowship together that they decided to make it an annual event on the first Sunday in August each year. It was still going strong when this history was written.

The Alumni Association established a Weaver College Scholarship Fund in 1976 and planned a drive to raise funds to furnish a Weaver College room in one of the new buildings at Brevard College. This room was furnished in 1978, under the guidance of Nathan Jones, president of the Association, and Mrs. William C. Reeves, chairman of the committee.

Much additional information about the college and its student activities makes interesting reading in Dry Ridge. Many ministers in the Western North Carolina Conference received their early collegiate work at Weaver College. But in

the long range view of history the most vivid and cherished memories are written in the hearts of those who lived, studied and loved for a few years within the guiding light of "Weaver College who sent out students with kinder and more valiant hearts and with higher ideals."

No Generation Gap Here

The Weaverville United Methodist Church has a very historic background, not only because it dates back so far in the past, but also because it is a church where some families have worshipped in consecutive generations for almost two centuries.

The story of John Weaver's conversion to Methodism is told in the family history, The Tribe of Jacob, written by Miss Pearl Weaver in 1962. She writes, "John was Presbyterian. . .worshipped with them until after 1800 when Bishop Francis Asbury of the Holston Methodist Conference crossed -as he wrote in his diary- the 'North Carolina Alps,' preached in the homes of the Fosters and Killians on Beaver Dam Creek, also in 'Col. Buncombe's Court House' and the Newton Academy in Asheville. After John Weaver, his son Jacob, and some neighbors of the lower settlement heard the Bishop a few times, they decided to build a meeting place in this neighborhood. John Weaver gave the lot on the south side of the ridge, and his neighbors helped cut logs, split boards, bring rock for the chimney and build the first Methodist Church in Buncombe County, the Reems Creek Methodist Church built about 1805."

With John Weaver as the first generation of Methodists in this community, we may say that at the present time, 1979, there are three families in the church who can trace back eight generations of Weavers as members of this Methodist Church.

One of these has retained the name of Weaver for all eight generations. They are, in geneological order, John Weaver, Jacob Weaver, John Siler Weaver, C. Pitser Weaver, Lawrence A. Leaver, L. A. Weaver, Jr. Tom Weaver and his young son, Matthew.

Another family can trace its history back eight generations in two ways, both ending with Clara Reeves, her son Richard and his three sons. One line is John Weaver, Jacob Weaver, Jesse R. Weaver, J. Lee Weaver, R. Clyde Weaver, Clara Reeves, Richard Hunt and his three sons. The other line is John Weaver, Montraville Weaver, Granny Margaret Parker, Will Parker, Mae Weaver, Clara Reeves, Richard Hunt and sons.

The third family with eight generations begins with John Weaver, Catherine Weaver Pickens, Robert Wesley Pickens, Fannie Garrison, Wiley Garrison, Ewell Garrison, Shelby Jean Shields, Susie Cole and her three brothers.

There are two families who have had seven consecutive generations as members in the church. One is John Weaver, Montraville Weaver, Mary A. E. Reagan, J. J. Reagan, J. Robert Reagan, Robert N. Reagan and his two daughters, Judy and Gail. The other is John Weaver, Catherine Weaver Pickens, Robert Wesley Pickens, Callie Reagan, Ernest M. Reagan, Ernest M. Reagan, Jr. and his two children, Rebecca and Ernie Reagan. J. Robert Reagan and Ernest M. Reagan were brothers and each could trace his ancestry back seven generations through these two lines.

There are four families who have had six generations as members of this church. The first is John Weaver, Jacob Weaver, William McKendree Weaver, Tom Hale Weaver, Inez Ward and her two children, George Ward, Jr. and Ruth Lee. The second

is John Weaver, Jacob Weaver, William McKendree Weaver, Richard Weaver, Betty Weaver Ludlam and Larry Ludlam. The third family goes back through the mother and the father: John Weaver, Montraville Weaver, Granny Margaret Parker, Will Parker, Carolyn Robinson and her two children, W. Arther Robinson, Jr. and Omelia R. Elmore; or through John Weaver, Montraville Weaver, Catherine W. Harris, Ida Lee Robinson, Arthur Robinson and his children, Arthur, Jr. and Omelia Elmore.

The fourth family is John Weaver, Jacob Weaver, Jesse R. Weaver, Sue Weaver Roberts, Morris Roberts and Blanche Roberts Robertson.

Four families number five generations as members of the church. The first is Dr. C. P. West, Glen West, Sr., Marshall J. (Buster) West, Jerry West Davis and her two children, Jennifer and Jeffrey. The second is Logan B. Mackey, Austin Mackey, Frances Hensley, Elaine Robinson and her daughter Leisa. The third is Granny Barnard, Least Roberts, Pearce Roberts, Polly Rowe, and Betty Lea Martinsen.

Two five generation families stem from Dr. James Americus Reagan. They are Dr. J. A. Reagan, J. J. Reagan, Ernest M. Reagan, Ernest M. Reagan, Jr. and Rebecca and Ernie Reagan. The other is Dr. J. A. Reagan, J. J. Reagan, J. Robert Reagan, Robert N. Reagan and daughters, Judy and Gail. Both of the last two families were previously listed in the Weaver generations.

One more interesting fact is that at the time of the writing of this history, there were four generations of the same family attending church -Mrs. Nat Holcombe, Earl Holcombe, Harriette Burnette and her sons, Kevin and Terry.

There are families in the church who number four successive generations as members. Some of these stem from Mrs. Marion Garrison, Mrs. C. H. Shope, Mrs. Marion J. Holcombe, Mrs. Thelma Gudger and Mrs. W. E. Sawyer.

Seventeen families have had three generations in attendance often at the same time. Henry Baird and Margaret Weaver Willingham hold the longest records for two generations of continuous membership in this church -each well over one hundred years. Henry Baird's grandparents were listed in the Salem Class of 1851. Marion Yost is probably the member who has the honor of having the longest tenure of continuous membership.

William Reeves was overheard to say that he hoped to live to see the day when he could meet the 7th generation in the same family during his lifetime. He feels that he may have this opportunity if he can arrange to meet Betty Lea Martinsen's grandchildren. Mrs. Lucy Reeves Anderson, who has lived to a ripe old age, says that she has known eight generations of her family during her lifetime.

Many local families date their ancestry back to John Weaver and his sons, Jacob and Montraville. But their later generations have lived in other places and attended other churches. But in Weaverville there seems to be a deep loyalty in being a Methodist and following in the footsteps of the mothers and fathers of past generations.

Epilogue

In writing the history of a congregation there are many important events that need to be remembered. Yet, what makes the Gospel vital in any generation is the presence of the living Christ. Our encounter with the Savior is experienced and transmitted in many ways. For many of us our initial experience of the love of Jesus Christ came to us through other persons. Men, women, and young people, who have surrendered their lives to Christ and submitted to the will of God, Christ was the source of their lives and He lived in and through them.

These faithful witnesses have transmitted the Gospel through all generations. It is to these persons who lived for Christ and permitted His love to shine through them that we are deeply grateful.

They have been a part of this congregation and in other congregations in this community and throughout the world. We are their spiritual heirs and they have been our heritage in the faith through all generations and it is for them that we thank God and pray that we may be faithful witnesses to Him in our time and generation.

-Rev. Dayle Groh